

Waterlees Community Forum  
Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
at the Oasis Community Centre, St. Michael's Avenue, Wisbech

1. Welcome & Introduction - Chris Stevens welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies –Stella, Michelle & Hannah (Circle Housing) & Taleyna Fletcher

3. Waterlees\North Ward Community Plan

There are no further updates with this at the moment. The next stage is to engage with the community and recruit the Community Champions and this will happen over the next couple of months and therefore, we will have more to report back on in October.

4. HLF Wisbech High Street Project

This item has been postponed as Taleyna Fletcher has sent her apologies. Terry gave the group a quick update as to where we are with the High Street Project. The project officer has been appointed, which is Taleyna Fletcher and a number of the owners of the buildings being looked at, under the project are working with her, in terms of Planning applications etc, and looking at drawing down the funding for the work. Some design concepts have been put together for the gap, for some community space and a small project group has been formed to manage this area.

5. Police Reports and Priorities

PCSO reported that there had been 5 burglaries, 18 rowdy nuisances (2 of these were at the Spinney), no theft from motor vehicles, 9 criminal damages and 93 crimes reported.

In relation to the priorities set at the last meeting, he hasn't been able to do a lot on them, because he has had to assist with the Town Centre and deal with issues on JF Kennedy Court. He has issued 5 tickets for cycling without lights and he hasn't issued any tickets for parking on the pavements. There has been 3 local arsons reported and the one at the Spinney is still being investigated and he is working closely with Spinney staff. Steve highlighted that the police will only have an incident record of any arson attacks, if they were also reported to the police, if someone only contacts the fire brigade, then they won't have a record of it.

Steve confirmed to Virginia that a parent hasn't reported to the police about 2 stolen children bicycles, which were reported on facebook, but haven't been reported to the police yet. The police did catch someone who was acting suspiciously and caught them with a lot of counterfeit cigarette on them.

Virginia asked for Steve's help with a problem on Ollard Avenue, where a resident is repairing cars, she has contacted FDC re this and they haven't done anything about this. One of the neighbours suggested contacting the Fire Brigade because he has gas bottles stored in his conservatory and is known to be welding at 3am in the morning. Virginia has contacted them and they don't have the power to sort this. He has loads of cars parked on the pavement and is running a business from his house. When a FDC Officer called, he found no cars but there is always lots of cars parked outside. Some of these cars are being sold from the neighbour's house near Virginia and she cannot seem to get anyone to have a look at this. Chris mentioned that this would come under Trading Standards, which is CCC. Steve is meeting with FDC later that week and Virginia will send him a list of all the car registration numbers, which she has.

Steve has been the only PCSO on the ward for the last year, but he will now be supported by Liam Ward, who is a new PCSO and he will introduce him to people over the next couple of weeks. Virginia is going to send Steve the information for 2 drug dens that she has been made aware of. People are providing her with the car registration numbers. It is hard to get the evidence and she has reported it before. They have children delivering on their bikes. She will email this information to Steve and the Inspector. Chris mentioned that the Street Pride group are aware of the increased drug usage on the ward and she is trying to set up a Drug Task group to look at this problem and include FDC, Police, WTC, Diane and Chris.

Chris mentioned that she hadn't had a chance to contact Matt Pickering re the strips across the road, to catch speeders. Terry informed Chris that Matt has now left.

It was confirmed that CCC will not be doing the white lines at the Orchard Primary School entrance because they cannot afford it. They quoted Paul £3k. Steve mentioned that we only need these extending by 3 or 4 foot and therefore he doesn't know why it would cost £3k.

Chris asked if anyone had used the 101 recently and a resident had and waited 20 minutes to be put through to the second operator and hung up. He phoned the next day about the quad bikes and got straight through. He is also experiencing a problem again with mini-motos and he thinks he knows where they live and this is in one of the houses on the left, just before the traffic lights on Mount Pleasant.

#### Waterlees Key Community Concern

1. Speeding and also not wearing seatbelts on Osbourne Road, all vehicles
2. Cyclists with no lights and riding on the footpaths.

Chris suggested that as Steve works early one week and then late the next and therefore depending on this, he can work on either of these key issues. It was suggested that perhaps we could include Grosvenor Road speeding as well and Chris mentioned that Wisbech Town Council have the speed equipment and we could train up some volunteers on the ward to carry out speedwatch of our own. It was highlighted that drivers slow down when they know someone is doing these speedwatch sessions and therefore it would be beneficial if we could get the speed strips across some of the problem roads around the ward, like other areas of Fenland.

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

Terry Jordan – (WTC) - At its meeting on 23 January 2017 Wisbech Town Council set its budget for the financial year 2017/18. The council's 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.

That budget maintains the same level of spending as in 2016/17 for community events and festivals. The council is also exploring opportunities for sponsorship to add to the money available, to continue with its ambition to make events bigger and better year-on-year. Wisbech Town Council will be organising or supporting a number of community events and festivals this year; these include:

- St George's Day event on 22 April (this Saturday); 10.00 am to 2.00 pm on the Market Place - there will be face painting, fairground rides, a bouncy castle, "live" dragon hunts and a colouring competition
- WisBEACH day on 4 June (which will include a sandy beach, donkey rides, fairground rides, traditional deck chairs, sea food, face painting, storytelling, brass band, beach bar, karaoke competition, Punch and Judy shows etc) on the Market Place
- Armed Forces Day on 18 June on the Market Place
- Arles Festival on 16 July on the Market Place
- Rock Festival on 6 August in Wisbech Park
- The Halloween Spooktacular on 28 October across the town centre
- Christmas lights switch-on on 27 November on the Market Place
- Wisbech Christmas Fayre on 10 December across the town centre.

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 £1.9 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund). Also the council has agreed to work with the Alzheimer's Society in making Wisbech a Dementia Friendly Society.

The Town Council operates a small grants budget and special grants budget to support community groups. At its meeting on 10 April 2017, the council's Resources Committee considered a number of grant applications and allocated approximately 60% the budget for 2017/18.

Some the successful small grant applications were: £200 to the Girls Venture Corps Air Cadets towards annual operational costs, £536 to the Wisbech and District Tourism Development Group towards the cost of producing an Around and About Wisbech leaflet for 2017/18, £466.80 to the Wisbech Library Friends

towards the cost of running 6 activity sessions during the summer holidays, to increase participation by children in the Summer Reading Challenge. In addition, the council has continued to provide annual funding towards the Rose Fair, the Wisbech Reads project, Wisbech in Bloom and the Citizens' Advice service.

The council's Assets Management Committee has worked with the firm of consultants which was 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 committee has decided that a working party, which would include not only a number of councilors but also members of the community, be set up to examine the proposals in greater detail and to undertake public consultation. The council's Sunday market and car boot event is going from strength to strength.

As I have mentioned at the last two meetings 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. Consequently, the Town Council worked, between October 2016 and February 2017, on the production of a business case – which has included input from community groups such as Wisbech Society, Wisbech in Bloom and the Ferry Project – and there has been dialogue 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. The document which was submitted to the County Council, in mid-February 2017, was an interim business case, making the request for an additional period of time to develop the case further and to be provided by the County Council with information as to its expectation/desire in relation to a financial arrangement in relation to Wisbech Town Council's acquisition of the Castle. Some of the activities suggested within the interim business case, which could be delivered from Wisbech Castle, are: education/learning events regarding historical times; the possible venue for a Music Hub for Fenland; wedding ceremonies; establishing a tea room or café; rooms for hire; themed banquets; events in the garden; tours of the dungeons. Wisbech Town Council will need to undertake further evaluation of the potential operational management options available.

As a result of its consideration of this document on 24 February 2017, the County Council decided that Wisbech Town Council be given more time to develop further its business case and also that it be offered County Council officer resource to assist with that work. An initial meeting between Councillor Miss Hoy (who is leading on this project for the Town Council), two officers of the County Council and me has taken place and a report from those officers is anticipated in time for reporting to the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council (next Monday).

I am pleased to be able to announce that Wisbech Town Council's 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) has been successful. The estimated cost of the work - to provide two build-outs into the carriageway – is £10,000 and the County Council will meet 90% of that cost.

The Wisbech Town Guide 2017 has been published within the last few weeks. In addition to delivery, by the publishers, to all households within Wisbech, the Town Council is in the process of providing copies to various community and public buildings; these include the Library, The Rosmini Centre, Queen Mary Centre, the Fenland@yourservice shop and the Oasis Centre.

Cllr Paul Clapp (CCC) – It was raised at the last meeting that the crossing on the junction of Mount Pleasant and Lynn Road, there is no sound and therefore if you were visually impaired, you would struggle. Paul has spoken to signals and he will have to phone them again because he hasn't heard back from them. The lights on De Havilland Road/Lynn Road, don't allow enough time for cars to come out of that junction, Paul confirmed that this has been increased to 10 seconds. Chris still sees a lot of cars jump the red lights because they have waited a long time and they want to get onto Lynn Road. It was mentioned at the last meeting, for the same lights about some distance lights, because once you start to cross and have to stop due to traffic, you cannot see that your lights are now red and that the pedestrians have the green light to cross, there is going to be a serious accident soon, if something doesn't change. Paul has spoken to

Highway and they have no intention to putting in a distance light at these traffic lights, as they haven't got the money to install these.

Chris suggested that once the new Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mayor has been elected, we invite him to one of our Forums.

A resident mentioned that there is a hole appearing on Mount Pleasant, top of Grosvenor Road, where the road is sinking again. Paul will phone them tomorrow.

Clarion Housing – The transfer of housing Stock from FDC to Roddons included a commitment to build 500 new homes in the Fenland area over a period of 10 years, this commitment has almost reached completion. The Group will continue to look at future development opportunities to address ongoing housing needs. A budget of £3m has been agreed for the Eastern region to support a planned repair programme of existing properties. If a tenant is experiencing problems with their property, we would encourage them to contact us so that we can address any individual repair matters directly with the tenant.

The fly tipped freezer has been removed, any future problems with fly tipping these should be reported directly to the contact centre in order that a Community Warden can respond to the problem. The Neighbourhood Officer will be happy to contact the tenant at Haley Close to discuss the problem with sheds, please forward tenant's details.

Question for Circle Housing – A tenant has approached Paul to say that a contractor that Clarion are using have asked the tenant to pay for repairs, like for Facia Boards. Virginia was aware that they don't cover the costs for repairs to fences, but not anything else. Chris felt this could be the contractors pulling a fast one and therefore asked Paul to get the tenants to flag this up with the Housing Officers.

Carl Suckling (FDC) – A resident on Kinderley Road is having a problem with Accent Nene Housing. He has written to them several times and received some appalling letters back re the position of 6 wheelie bins which sit right outside their entrance and Nene say they are not going to move these as they have spent enough money in that area. Chris asked if Carl could assist with this problem. He will look into this, especially as residents leave them where the bin men leave them. The tenant also gets a lot of fly tipping there as well because there are a number of houses of Multi occupancy.

Eastfield Way there is still a problem with the amount of litter, this hasn't been resolved, it has actually got worse because furniture have joined the bags of rubbish now. Carl will speak to the team about this again. Although this pathway isn't on the ward, it is one of the main ways into town and will only be used by residents from Waterlees. Owen has sent Rebecca Robinette some photos of the rubbish, as she is monitoring this area.

Community House will be working with Partners to look at what they can do for the Community. FDC will also have access to Grant Finder and they will be able to source some funding opportunities to benefit the community and also other partners.

Diane Fenner (Spinney Adventure Playground) – they are currently very short staffed as the Lead Play worker left in November 2016 and they will be recruiting and another Play Worker is currently off due to long term sickness, leaving just 4 Play Workers to cover everything. Diane mentioned the boat fire, which was reported on facebook as being one of the barges, but was actually the small wooden play boat. This was put out by the fire brigade and has since been removed. Staff are currently working very closely with PCSO Steve, both for the safety of staff, but also users of the Playground.

The Spinney staff always do a sweep of the playground before each session and have only found 2 needles in the past, but in light of what was highlighted early, she will ask staff to be extra vigilant.

There is currently 2 port-a-loos because of the problems with the toilet facilities, flooding. They put in an insurance claim, but they haven't paid out because this was deemed an accident and therefore not covered. She is waiting to hear from Property as to when these will be fully functional again, as port-a-loos are not the best option and they will need something before the National Play Day event. Paul confirmed that he will be doing the BBQ again this year.

The Spinney is working with other partners for referrals from them to work with young people on a 1:1 basis, to assist them with some of their issues. Staff build up relationships with the young people and often report to other partners, where more support is needed to improve this person's life. They are also have an ear to the ground and pick up on any issues or concerns.

The new Locality Manager for Wisbech is Tanya Edgell and she is known to many of the partners and residents, because she worked in the area, years ago.

#### 7. Any Other Business

Selective Licencing wasn't agreed at FDC Cabinet meeting. This is not good news for Wisbech because it would have helped the tenants who are experiencing bad landlords and the Officers have wasted a lot of time and effort looking into this.

Virginia raised that there was a problem with a tenant on Osborne Road, with piles of rubbish both in the front garden, as well as the back and they have obtained a court order to evict this tenant and also to remove all the rubbish, which has become a health hazard.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017, 7pm

Chris closed the meeting at 8.30pm and thanked everyone for coming.