
MEETING	GUILDHALL WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	7 FEBRUARY 2011
VENUE	FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, FRIARGATE
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS J LOOKER AND B WATSON 43 RESIDENTS SGT JON ASVADI, SGT FI WILLEY – SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM IAIN DUNN – STREET ENVIRONMENT OFFICER ADAM GRAY – NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UNIT MICHAEL HAWTIN – NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UNIT

1. 1. DROP IN SURGERY 6.45PM

Residents came to the drop-in surgery and spoke to the councillors, street environment officer, neighbourhood management officer and representative from York Teaching Hospital Governors. There was information on the 'York, New City Beautiful report.

2. WELCOME & MINUTES

Cllrs Looker and Watson opened the meeting.

Cllr Watson informed the committee that John Woods, an active and dedicated Street Environment Officer had recently passed away. He was well known for attendance at Ward meetings and dealing quickly and expeditiously with residents concerns. Cllr Watson suggested a seat plaque be erected in remembrance of Mr. Woods. This was wholeheartedly approved by the committee.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true record, and were accordingly signed as such.

Cllrs Watson and Looker informed the committee that as part of the new Economic Vision for the City Centre a consultation event, City Beautiful, would take place at 5.00 at York Theatre Royal on 21st February. Residents were encouraged to attend and express their views on the proposals. It was agreed to make a copy of the Economic Vision available in York reference library.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE TEAM

Sgt Jon Asvadi and Sgt Fiona Willey introduced themselves to the committee. Sgt Willey will shortly be replacing Sgt Asvadi as the dedicated officer for the Guildhall Ward.

Sgt Asvadi provided an update of crime figures / criminal activity in the Guildhall Ward. The last quarter has seen a significant decrease in burglary, fraud, criminal damage and sexual offences, but an increase in theft. There were 12 burglaries in the Groves in January alone, and PC Milligan urged Groves residents to leave lights on when not at home.

Operations Spoke and Style are still operational in the Guildhall Ward. 8,000 cycles have now been registered through Operation Spoke. Operation Style has seen a significant reduction in street drinking and anti-social behaviour in Union Terrace, which is a no-alcohol zone.

Ongoing work is being undertaken with the Salvation Army to reduce street begging, and there have been several nuisance tenant evictions in Walmgate and the Groves - working in collaboration with the CYC Housing team.

Residents reported daily instances of street drinking around the Monkgate Walk-in Health Centre. Residents were urged to report any instances of street drinking using the local police number, 0845 60 60 247.

Re Operation Spoke, residents asked whether emphasis could be placed on encouraging retailers to register bicycles with the police at the point of sale. PCs Milligan and Willey agreed to publicise the scheme amongst retailers.

Residents raised awareness of increased levels of graffiti around the Rowntrees Wharf and Navigation Road areas, and were encouraged to ring the CYC Graffiti hotline (published in YorWard) to report these incidents.

Sgt Asvadi mentioned that North Yorkshire Police were currently facing a funding reduction of 20%, equating to the loss of 323 overall staffing posts over forthcoming months. However, it is the intention to target remaining resources more effectively through a reorganisation of the shift system.

There will be a city-wide restructuring of the police into four Areas (Safer Neighbourhood Areas). Response officers will not come from Fulford Police Station, but from local centres (similar to Safer Neighbourhood Teams). This enables police to concentrate on different types of crime in different areas.

Policing of the Guildhall Ward will be split between the City Centre and the Groves area. Residents welcomed these changes.

4. TOWER GARDENS IMPROVEMENTS

Dave Meigh, Head of Parks and Open Spaces at City of York Council, outlined options for a major refresh of Tower Gardens, stating that he felt

that the gardens were currently dark, gloomy and muddy - particularly near the river frontage and New Walk Terrace.

Dave outlined plans to brighten the river frontage, remove some trees along the river, create edging along the pathways to reduce wear along the diagonal pathways in the gardens.

There was general approval of the plans and agreement that the Gardens were in clear need of a refresh.

Residents felt that the redesign of the gardens should be sensitive to the needs of all communities, but particularly young families with pushchairs. All were in agreement that control of Geese would continue to pose a key future challenge.

Residents asked whether there was a risk that the York Wheel would be relocated in the gardens. Dave said that while this was possible, planning permission would be required and he had not been approached by the owners of the wheel.

Cllr Watson raised a concern over the risk of increased mooring if the river frontage was improved. Dave Meigh promised to monitor the situation carefully, and added that the proximity to Skeldergate Bridge would limit any expansion of additional moorings in the area.

Dave confirmed that the refresh of the gardens would be in-line with the new Economic Vision for York City Centre.

Residents were encouraged to contact either Dave Meigh or Michael Hawtin from the Neighbourhood Management Team with any thoughts or comments. (Contact details available in YorWard). Further consultations about the gardens will take place with Friends of New Walk and Tower Place residents'.

If works progress according to plan Dave estimated that the refresh of the Gardens would be underway by early Summer.

An enquiry was raised by a resident in respect of tree planting / tree removal in the Micklegate Ward. Cllr Looker and Watson agreed to pass the enquiry onto the appropriate Cllrs.

5. LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2011-12

The final list of proposed Local Improvement Schemes for 2011-12 were discussed and agreed. Cllrs Looker and Watson explained that there could be a potential 10% reduction in overall Ward Committee funding for 2011-12, which would be decided by the Council budget setting process in late February 2011.

It is likely that the Community Chest would be used as a contingency fund to subsidise the other listed Local Improvement Schemes (if budget cuts are implemented).

Residents with concerns or interests around the siting of seating, benches and salt bins were encouraged to contact Neighbourhood Management Officer, Michael Hawtin.

Some questions were raised in respect of the York St. John Student Union Night Marshall Scheme. Representatives from the Student Union explained that the scheme was purely for students, and involved Night Marshals patrolling residential areas such as the Groves where students were likely to pass through late at night. The scheme has seen a significant reduction in levels of student anti-social behaviour. The Student Union would seek to sustain the scheme in the longer term through the Safer York Partnership.

Cllrs Looker and Watson explained that the Have Your Say publication provided a progress report on the Local Improvement Schemes operating in the current financial year.

6. CURRENT LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

Cllrs mentioned that there was a slide available and copies of the short report available on the sign-in table.

7. HAVE YOUR SAY

Issues were raised around City of York Council's proposals to site an Integrated Drug Treatment Centre on Monkgate. A Monkgate resident explained that the Council intended to integrate all of York's drug treatment centres within a single site. Planning permission had been sought and local residents had been consulted about the proposals.

Residents agreed that it was appropriate to house all drug treatment provision around a single site, rather than it being dispersed across the City, but concerns were raised around the appropriateness of the Monkgate site, and the limited amount of resident consultation that had occurred beforehand.

It was felt that the procedure of site selection had been unprofessional and insensitive to the needs of local residents. Residents felt that the Monkgate area already has a concentration of drug, alcohol and homelessness support facilities (Arc light, Personalised Medical Service, Probation Service etc).

Cllr Looker agreed to arrange a meeting with residents in the vicinity of Monkgate to discuss their concerns.

Cllr Watson urged residents to write to the Council planning department to express their concerns. Residents can also register to speak at the planning panel meeting. If it is agreed that there is sufficient concern over the development then further site visits and a review of the development could occur.

Joanne Coot, Public Rights of Way Officer, is producing a definitive map of Public Rights of Way in the City. If any residents wish to receive further

details or object to the rights of way, Joanne can be contacted on 01904 551442 or joanne.coote@york.gov.uk

, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.45 pm and finished at 9.15 pm].