
Meeting	Fishergate Ward Committee
Date	29 April 2008
Present	Councillors A. D'Agorne and Taylor
In Attendance	46 residents Jonathan Tyler, Independent Chair Clair Bailey, Street Environment Officer Russel Trewartha, Discus Bungalows Marie Lodge, Tees Valley Housing Group Sgt Andy Haigh, PC Joanne Brooke, Safer Neighbourhood Team John Oxley, CYC Archaeologist Graham Bruce, OnSight Archaeology Rose Kent, Grainne, Jamsine, Alex & Ben, The Melbourne Centre Michael Hawtin, Neighbourhood Management Officer

1. WARD TEAM & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SURGERY

During the surgery residents had the opportunity to speak to their Ward Councillors, Street Environment Officer, Safer Neighbourhoods Team, Representatives from the City Centre Action Plan, Representatives from the DISCUS Bungalows scheme, David Webster about the Fulford Road Corridor and the Neighbourhood Management Officer. They also had the chance to pick up some 'green' giveaways including solar powered battery chargers and batteries, jute bags, recycled mousemats and vouchers for compost.

2. WELCOME AND MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Jonathan Tyler, who chaired the meeting welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to complete the evaluation sheets that were with the minutes to be approved.

The City Centre Action Plan was mentioned. We are at the very beginning of the process and the team will come back with more information later in the year.

3. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAM POLICE REPORT

Sgt Andy Haigh told the meeting that last year there was a drop of 2% in Crime. There had been a business fraud committed in the ward that accounted for 120 crimes. Without these figures included the drop in crime would be 20-25%. From the 1st April to the 23rd April crime was down 17% on the same period last year. Burglary was down 83% but auto-crime and criminal damage were up on the previous year. What was particularly causing a problem was thieves targeting catalytic converter to get the platinum and other metals. They have special tools which can remove the

converter in a matter of minutes. He advised people that if they had garage to put their cars in it and if they see any suspicious people or vans to report it to the police immediately.

The priorities identified at the last meeting were;

- Cycling on the footpath
- Burglary
- Anti-social behaviour

The team had issued 29 fixed penalty notices and 25 verbal warnings. There are going to be stickers on the lampposts and there will be education about it on the web site.

Anti-social behaviour – there are known groups and parents have been approached. Alcohol has been taken from young people on the field near the Millennium Bridge. The police are confident there will be a reduction in Anti-social behaviour before the next meeting. They are trying to set up football matches and other events involving young people and the police.

Burglaries – there has been a drop of 85%. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team did a massive letter-drop and increased surveillance on a particular subject. They have set up a rat-trap to catch thieves in the act and made several arrests. They have liaised with scenes of crime officers to get a good MO (the criminal's method of operation) and made several good arrests.

Q. I live close to the playing fields here at St George's School and sometimes the kids play football and drink alcohol and get rowdy and swear which upsets me. I get a bit worried as they're playing football by parked cars and I'm worried about smashed windows. I'm not against young people having a good time but sometimes they act badly. When I do ask them to be quiet they're rude.

A. Kids will be kids. If they can be allowed to play football on the fields, if they cause a nuisance officers can create more patrols in the area. If it goes on too long, certainly not up to midnight, you should call 0845 60 60 247. If it seriously troubling you and the play becomes anti-social behaviour you should report them.

Q. You mentioned reporting it – when should we use 999 and when should we use 0845 60 60 247?

A. Dial 999 if a crime is in progress, or if you think a crime is about to be committed, or if you suspect someone who has committed a crime is still in the area.

4. MELBOURNE FILMMAKERS

Rose Kent from the Melbourne Street Centre – Cube Media introduced Jasmine, Alex and Ben the young filmmakers. She told the meeting that they were able to work with young people thanks to funding from the Ward Committee. They then showed a short film called KidzRound.

After the film the young people told the meeting that they had come up with the idea so that they could cover more than one theme. Each person had a say in what was done and what job they did, presenter, computer technician, clapperboard operator, sound and cameraperson. They learned many things during the process how to work as a team, how to operate a video camera and how to act.

Q. What is your next project?

A. We want to talk to local people about their stories, if anyone here has any ideas just let us know at the Melbourne Centre.

Q. In the film you didn't credit the music – who wrote it etc.

A. We all helped but mainly it was Michael on the computer. Jasmine, Ben and Sara sang it.

5. FISHERGATE; THEN

John Oxley, City of York Council archaeologist gave a brief speech about the history of the area, how the city has been in continuous occupation for more than 2,000 years. He explained that recently there had been excavations where the Novotel is now and where the bingo hall is. The area is on the tip of a glacial moraine and there is evidence of settlement here from pre-history. Excavations show layers of evidence. In the middle ages there was the Gilbertine Priory of St. Andrew and other churches. Some of the existing modern roads will run along old parish boundaries. He then introduced Graham Bruce from OnSite Archaeology.

Graham gave a presentation with slides of the dig at the Kent Street site. He explained that there was a church there but that only the cobble built foundations still remained. Much of the archaeology was disturbed when the car park had been built and when the cattle market was constructed. The top of the archaeology had been shaved off and drains dug through graves. In form the church was Medieval laid out East to West with the nave at the west end.

In total there were something like 650 burials in the relatively small site. Some of the burials were straight forward. Others were more confusing with people buried on top of previous graves and graves cut through old burials. In some of the burials up to six bodies had been placed side by side. In some items had been buried with the bodies which was unusual. Some bodies were buried curled up in a position similar prehistoric burials. There was one body interred in the Chancel with a chalice near the head. This was likely to be the vicar or it could be the Abbot from Whitby Abbey.

As they continued the dig they found more and more multiple burials many not wrapped or in coffins and not always face-up. Of the 650 burials over 100 were from multiple graves. 30 to 40 of the bodies have been analysed and they are all men aged between 15 and 50. This could be a military profile but there are no marks of injury or what you'd expect to see from people killed in battle. They are hoping there will be a television programme about it soon. He did want to acknowledge the people who did the digging.

Q. What is going to happen with the bodies?

A. They will be cleaned, lifted, analysed to find out how they died. They may end up in a museum although there have been discussions about building a mausoleum to house them on site. The church has been deconsecrated since the 16th Century.

Q. How did you know how where to dig?

A. It was a long process. It started in late 1980s. Some time ago small trenches were dug in lots of places and it was very clear that the area contained some important archaeology. The church is well aligned with Kent Street and Fawcett Street, this was because Kent Street was an ancient boundary. A lot of churches disappeared in the area. There were hills here up to 180 years ago when they were levelled. This dig was paid for by Persimmon Homes as part of their contract.

Q. Where can I find information about local history?

A. Central Library or the City Records Office. It's the door on the right hand side of the Art Gallery. There's also the imagine York website which has 5,000 to 10,000 pictures. Some of the schools have visited the site and it is now visible because we've got open fencing there now. It was possible before due to the law concerning the archaeology of dead bodies.

Q. Do you have any ideas why so many burials happened at about the same time.

A. Mass graves are usually the last thing to happen. There was a major plague epidemic in 1604 but that doesn't answer why the bodies are men of military age. Towton was described as the most savage battle in the 15th Century with 28,000 deaths. Another possibility is that they come from the siege of York. 25,000 people besieged the city. (The cavalry had been sent to Newcastle for their protection. The bodies could come from an illness related to the besieging army.

6. FISHERGATE: NOW

Russell Trewartha (City of York Council) and Marie Lodge (Tees Valley Housing Group) displayed plans and drawings during the ward surgery and were available for questions and discussion with residents about the development.. During the main meeting it was remarked that the archeological history of the ward had been very interesting and now the re-development of the Discus Bungalows would look to the future of two new communities for Fishergate. There are three sites - St Anns Court/Horsman Avenue and Regent Street in this ward and Richmond/Faber Street in Heworth. The following was also explained:

City of York Council presently own the 100 Discus bungalows for older people across the three sites The bungalows were constructed during 1975/76 using non-traditional building methods and most of the fabric of the properties, except for the concrete base and the steel frame are made from products containing asbestos. The homes were only expected to last approximately 30 years and the Council has to ensure that all its homes

meet the 'Decent Homes Standard' by 2010. In March 2006 the Council agreed to the demolition of the bungalows and redevelopment of the sites, giving an opportunity to build new homes that meet the housing needs and aspirations of current residents, and local people in the future. There is high housing need in the city and redevelopment provides an opportunity to develop additional housing at a time when development opportunities for affordable housing in the city are limited.

There has been widespread consultation with residents through the Residents Development Association, which enabled representation on a Project Board, set up to oversee the selection of a developer. The resident representatives on the Board ensured that views of the committee and the wider residents group were considered throughout the process. Following a tender evaluation process, in November 2007 the Council selected the partnership of Tees Valley Housing Group, York Housing Association and Southdale Homes Ltd, as the preferred development partner to purchase and develop the three Discus sites.

The development aims to provide a total of 198 properties. This will include a total 100 re-provision of 60 bungalows across all three sites and 40 extra care apartments for rent. The other housing will be 50% Affordable for rent and discount for sale and the remainder of housing will be market sale. The development will reflect a mixture of housing types and sizes and all dwellings will be visually indistinct regardless of tenure. The Council is now working closely with the development partner through a dedicated Project Steering Group involving resident members to move this project forward.

Thee following questions were put forward by residents:

Q. I'm a bit concerned about the levels of consideration for the density of houses in the area. The existing communities around Regent street will be swamped.

A. A large number of the properties on Regent Street will be 2-bed bungalows, but there will also be a number of 3bed and 2 bed houses and some 2 bed apartments. A lot of work has been carried out to consider the integrity of the area and to keep density levels at an acceptable level.

Q. Will the development increase the parking problem in the area?

A. The majority of the bungalows and other housing will have a dedicated parking space.. and we continue to work with our Highways team to ensure that any increased use of parking will minimize the impact of parking issues in the wider area.

Q. Should we not be creating car-free zones rather than encouraging car use?

A. The car parking spaces were a specific request from Discus Bunaglows residents and we need to consider all options within this development so it meets the present and future needs of residents in York

Q. What sort of sustainable technologies are going to be used?

A. The development will include sustainable technology, such as renewable energy sources, solar-panels and loft-insulation, working to a very high sustainability specification. We have also considered the community safety of the sites to ensure the development meets 'Secured

by Design' standard and will closely work with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer in these areas

Q. What exactly do you mean by affordable homes?

A. Affordable Housing is housing, whether for rent, sale or low cost home ownership in the form of Shared ownership or Discount for sale, that is provided at a cost considered affordable in relation to the general housing market.

Q. What stops people buying a house in this way and selling it immediately?

A. To apply for low cost home ownership you firstly need to apply to join the Council's housing register. For example, in Discount for sale when you sell the home, you have to sell it at the same discount percentage at which you bought it. When you want to sell you must notify the housing association that manages your home and it must be sold to someone who is unable to afford a home on the open market.

7. END OF YEAR REPORT

Cllr. D'Agorne described what happened and how the budget had been used. He told the meeting about the repainting of the coat of arms on Fishergate Bar, the residents voted for it and its been completed. It has now been restored to the original colour and shouldn't need repainting for 20-30 years. He mentioned about the grant to the Melbourne Centre and about the Sshh! campaign.

The scrap of land at the corner of Marlborough Grove has now been repaired at last but 5 bollards have been put up in a strange arrangement. There have been issues about who owns the land but the shops are run by tenants.

He also told them about the crossing which has appeared in the press with two replacement Belisha beacons on each side. He explained that the new poles are illuminated to make the crossing more visible at night and improve safety - the old ones will be removed as soon as the power connection for the new ones is complete.

He talked about York Pride and finished by mentioning that some of the smaller independent shops have shut and that residents should support them as much as possible as they provide an important local service to young and old alike.

8. HAVE YOUR SAY

There were no other issues raised.

, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.45 pm and finished at 9.10 pm].