
MEETING	FISHERGATE WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	21 APRIL 2009
PRESENT	27 RESIDENTS; COUNCILLORS D'AGORNE AND TAYLOR; ANDY HAIGH AND JO BROOKE, SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAM; CLAIR BAILEY- LANE, SEO; PENNY GOFF AND MIKE PROCTOR REPRESENTING NHS TRUST; ANNIE THOMPSON REPRESENTING YORK LINK; EDWARD HARLAND FROM YORK IN TRANSITION; JAMIE TYLER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK STUDENTS' UNION; ANDY HUDSON, OLIVER COLLINS AND RICHARD STRATFORD FROM CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

1. 7:00PM - SURGERY

This was an opportunity for residents of the ward to talk to their local Councillors, Street Environment Officer, the Neighbourhood Policing Team, members of the Neighbourhood Management Unit, Penny Goff representing NHS Trust, Annie Thompson from York LINKs, Jamie Tyler from York Student Action, Rachel Smith from Children and Young People's Services. There was also a chance for residents to put forward suggestions to be considered for the Sustainable Communities Act

2. 7:30PM - MAIN MEETING - WELCOME AND MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were formally approved

3. WARD TEAM UPDATES

3. Sgt Andy Haigh (AH) from the Safer Neighbourhood's Team gave a police update.
 - 3.1. The last year was a successful one. However, the figures published in the your Ward newsletter were unfortunately incorrect. Revised figures will be in the next issue of Your Ward.
 - 3.2. In 2007-08, there were a total of 955 Crimes, but in 2008-09, 668 crimes. This is a reduction of 287/30%
 - 3.3. Burglary (dwellings) has fallen from 47 cases to 33 (reduction around 25%)
 - 3.4. Burglary (other – sheds, garages, etc) down 4% from 51 to 49
 - 3.5. Drug cases down from 92-25 (72% reduction). Much of this can be explained by the change in the way these incidents are being recorded.
 - 3.6. Theft is down from 198-119 cases
 - 3.7. Other is down from 53-18 cases.

- 3.8. Anti-Social behaviour dropped by around 100 cases, from 942-829. We have been targeting hot-spot areas, with young people being the main offenders.
- 3.9. Public priorities are voted on by residents through Your Ward. Reporting of traffic problems are passed on to Traffic Management Unit. Forms are available at the meeting. Across the city, Fishergate area is not treated as a high priority, but the presence of the Police Station means that there are usually cars patrolling the area.
- 3.10. Cycling on footpaths: PCSOs patrol Broadway, though this is difficult to stop completely.
- 3.11. Lots of emails have been received relating to anti-social behaviour

Call for comments and questions

Comment: There has been no improvement regarding cycling on the footpaths on Broadway. It is not getting any better and is mixed with anti-social behaviour. It's a menace.

AH: The problem of cycling on footpaths will probably only increase with the cycle path. Problem with international students, we are trying to educate, but it is practically impossible to eradicate entirely.

Comment: I don't consider this a problem unless it is tied in with other problems.

AH: Yes, people also often complain about the other argument; that it is dangerous to cycle on the roads. But the law is the law, and we try to deal with it as sensibly as possible.

Q. What happens when the police station moves?

AH: I've seen no plans yet. It won't happen for a long time.

DT: Apologies to SNT for comments made in the press. Crime is coming down due to the hard work of the police and not just because there has been a change in the way in which crime figures are recorded.

AD: I have asked about this situation and been told that there will be no move for at least five years, and the recession has probably put the station back further

AH; the Police Pledge has been launched. Feel free to come back at us if you think we are not fulfilling our pledge. We try to reply as quickly as possible.

4. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

Andy Hudson, (Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services), and Councillor D'Agorne delivered a presentation on the Sustainable Communities Act.

4. AD: a number of people have asked for this. It is a way of getting around the problem of having no mechanism for obtaining more power from central government. We are hoping that this will become an annual process. This is a broad act with the potential to give councils new powers. It is not just another consultation process, but actually empowers local communities.

4.1. AD: One suggestion, Changing Business Rates, for example, is very topical. You could petition to change the law or funding. We are trying to get people involved.

- 4.2. AHud: The Neighbourhood Management Unit is handling this process. Currently we are in the process of gathering ideas from the local community. We are collecting ideas until May 8th. Then further consultation in the form of a Citizens' Panel to finalise ideas. Then the Executive will reach agreement on proposals. Agreed proposals will be submitted to the Local Government Association, acting on behalf of local councils.
- 4.3. All councils are doing this. The process is very new. Even the LGA does not really know how it will shortlist suggestions.
- 4.4. Hopefully the whole cycle will take a year. From consultation to granting of powers.
- 4.5. The criteria for a valid proposal is that it must be something only central government can do and it must promote the sustainability of the local community. You don't need to worry about the validity of suggestions. If your suggestions do not fall under the Act, then they will be handled by the Council. We just want your ideas. There will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting to make your proposals, or see the website, post a form, or send an email.
- 4.6. DT; The council have made a complicated process relatively easy. You should feel free to contact us.

Q. Could any council benefit from schemes specific to York?

AHud: We have asked this, and had no response from the LGA. We are still learning the process.

Q. Is there a specific budget allocated for proposals?

AHud: No. But hopefully funding would be tied up with any new powers.

5. YORK IN TRANSITION

5. Edward Harland from York in Transition introduced a short video presentation outlining the issues informing their work.

5.1 York in Transition is relatively new. We put on a number of events emphasising the power of community. The video shows how Cubans responded to the lack of oil after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

5.2 Peak oil is about resource depletion contrasted with increasing demand. We had an insight into the severity of the situation when oil prices were so high last year. The issue will be noticeably severe again after the current economic problems.

Video Presentation Part 1

5.3 York In Transition is made up of people interested in Peak Oil and climate Change and adapting our lifestyles.

5.4. York In Transition emphasises togetherness. In this way it differs from other campaigning organisations.

Video Presentation 2: Looking at food production in Cuba.

5.5 Cuba offers ideas on what communities can do together, planning ahead can help us deal with these issues.

5.6 There are about 200 transition groups throughout the UK. Our main work in York is awareness raising.

5.7 We want it to get to the stage where people demand that politicians take these issues seriously

Call for Questions.

Q. Farming yields versus chemical production methods. The common argument is not actually the case.

EH. There was some of this in the full version of the video that we didn't have time to see

Q. How much is this related to permaculture?

EH. There are many different ways in which change can be achieved.

Q. To what extent is York reliant on Fossil Fuels?

EH. Everywhere is reliant: fertiliser, fuel, transport, etc. Oil used for practically everything.

Q. How do we get rid of the perception that organic food is expensive?

EH. Currently we have a very short term view of things. We cannot sustain our current practices, which means that in the long run they are actually very expensive.

Comment: When fuel prices go up, all food is expensive.

DT: We have an over-reliance on imported food. The more resilience we have now, the stronger we will be for the future.

EH: Those interested can sign up at the ward committee meeting.

6. NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

6. Mike Proctor from the NHS Trust gave a presentation outlining the work of the Trust and the benefits of membership.

6.1 York Hospital has had Trust status for two years. Being a Trust gives the hospital the freedom and opportunity to develop its services locally, rather than being governed by the centre.

6.2 It also means that there is an injection of local democracy in the process. 17 of the 32 members of the board of governors are elected.

6.3 The hospital wants to play a more active role in the local community. Everyone is affected by the hospital and requires it at some point in their life.

6.4 Becoming a member costs no more than the price of a stamp. Members receive a newsletter six times a year giving information on the development of the hospital. You can get involved as much or as little as you like. There are currently around 18,000 members. The Trust needs more members, so take the opportunity to get involved.

6.5 York has a good local hospital but it can be made better with more public involvement.

Call for comments and questions

Q. Health problems differ from region to region. Does York have unique characteristics?

MP: The population of York is well educated, has a good network of GPs , top quality consultants, but an ageing population. No specific conditions other than that the population is getting old.

Q. In the light of the York in Transition video, what impact will climate change have on the NHS?

MP: The hospitals takes this into account, but having just watched the video, I want them to do more. We [the hospital/NHS] are massive consumers of energy, and we need to take this into account in any future plans. By getting involved, you are able to influence this.

Q. I don't think that the first question was answered. The purpose of the Trust is accountability. You haven't specified the unique characteristics of York.

MP: The reason for this is that my business is ill health rather than illness prevention. Other bodies deal with this. The local needs in a mixed urban-rural ward is going to be different to Central London.

Q. Following on from that point on illness prevention, surely the gauge for measuring success is a reduction in the numbers of people who need to use the service. Will this become a priority? – illness prevention over offering cures.

MP: It will be finding alternatives to hospital care. Hospital can be a very dangerous place. We have no problem being a smaller organisation. We have just got over our worst outbreak of flu and related illnesses for 10 years.

Comment: You don't get enough praise. Since the inception of the NHS, life expectancy has increased substantially.

MP: I have been in the NHS for thirty years. I have seen huge changes for the good, particularly in the last ten years.

Q. I don't know of any bad experiences. What co-operation is there with non-hospital cases?

MP: We work very closely with the Primary Care Trust. They have had problems with finances.

7. HAVE YOUR SAY

The meeting was opened up for comments and questions from residents.

Q. Allotments. There are not enough available, but there are also a number of abandoned ones. If people are not using them then they should be taken away.

HG: Low Moor had its AGM last week and this was discussed. Users of allotment sites 'not worked' will be issued with a warning, and ultimately evicted if they don't respond satisfactorily. There have been many complaints, but we still have to give people a chance.

DT: The Council recognises that there is a need for more allotments but Fishergate isn't a top priority.

AD: There has been a new one started in New Earswick. The 1922 Allotments Act enables residents to petition for more access. Now is a good time to do so as land use plans are currently being made.

Q. The green cycle markings are very nice on Fulford Road. When will the next stage be completed?

AD: Cemetery Rd-Heslington Lane started this end, going towards Fulford. The road markings are not in yet, because of imminent resurfacing. I think there is also a hold up with some wring around a lamppost. Waiting for the next stage.

DT: Junction at Hospital Fields road. It is important to include traffic flow. People will then park where they are working. One drawback is that this will further delay the bus lanes to Fulford.

Q. How much will it cost to have a pedestrian bridge over Hospital Fields Road?

AD: There needs to be a balancing act at the crossing; letting enough traffic through, but also giving pedestrians enough time to cross. Some work has been attempted to this effect.

DT: A pedestrian bridge would cost about £1million. St Peter's School commissioned one and it cost something in this region.

Q. The Barbican. The area around City View House seems to have been abandoned, meaning that the bushes which have grown up there make it dangerous. It needs attention.

DT: I will take this up. It is council land. Should be able to get something done.

Comment: The work cleaning the graffiti was very well done.

Q. Cameras going in on Fulford Rd?

AD. Yes. They will be linked to the traffic control centre.

DT: Presumably these are for traffic only.

Independent Facilitator: Hazel Gallogly

[The meeting started at 7.30 pm and finished at 9.10 pm].