

---

MEETING	FISHERGATE WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	12 OCTOBER 2015
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS D'AGORNE AND TAYLOR CLAIRE TAYLOR, COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES TEAM, CYC
APOLOGIES	NONE

---

**1. 6.30PM - 7PM - DROP IN SURGERY**

Residents had an opportunity to speak informally to Councillors' D'Agorne and Taylor, Claire Taylor, partners and community groups working in the ward.

**2. 7.00PM - 8.30PM FORMAL MEETING - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Committee was introduced and the schedule for the meeting was outlined. This is a non-political formal committee where councillors form the core of the committee, but discussion is open.

**3. NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING AND WARD BUDGETS**

The council has established a new finance model for the allocation of funds in each ward, with devolved power allowing for more detailed community involvement in the budgets and spending in their local area. The plan aims to empower local residents and tailor budgets to the needs of local residents. The new model encourages communities to create residents associations formed in streets etc.

There will be four meetings of the committee across the year:

- One formal meeting towards the start of the financial year where budgets will be outlined. (Although it is now late in the financial year, this meeting is that first formal meeting).
- The other three meetings can be in other formats, depending on the needs of the community and what the meeting is aiming to achieve.

Councillors Andy D'Agorne and Dave Taylor then outlined the different budgets that the ward will be working with:

General ward budget - **£7,075** (annual)

- This budget may be spent in two ways: through grants which will be allocated via application forms outlining the benefit the spending and through the commissioning of private companies.

"Pride in York" budget - **£9,434** (annual) .

- The budget aims to get local people involved and reduce the ward's reliance on council services.
- Alongside the annual budget, there will be a one-off "Pride in York" fund - **£15,249** which is a one-off allocation based on the current grounds maintenance spending. This money may be spent on providing grants to partners and investment in projects which will facilitate community groups taking on more work.
- Cllr Taylor described how this funding may be spent, with the example of a floral display on a roundabout where the ward may decide to ask a company to sponsor the floral display or invest in a more long-term solution with tubs and planters.

**Community care fund - £3,538 (annual)**

- This money is designated for the prevention or delay of people requiring access to formal care packages.

**Highways programme - £11,792 (annual)**

- CYC will conduct their annual city-wide assessment of highways and outline the priority levels of their funding – Cllr Taylor noted that this is expected to be received in November.
- This £11,792 funding will be available to the ward to complete work which is not to be carried out by the council programme. This can cover a range of highways infrastructure including; surfacing of roads and footpaths, street lighting etc.
- It is noted that CYC will still be responsible for the maintenance of major roads in the city, but will cut back on some other. The ward highway programme funding is there to fill the gaps left by the council.

**Questions from residents:**

One resident noted that we are well into this financial year and asks whether the one-off "Pride in York" funding will need to be spent before April.

- The councillors are aware of this issue, noting that there have been changes in the council due to elections this year. The new council has established this change in process which has caused some delays to the programme (including this initial meeting taking place in October, rather than the beginning of the financial year as stated).
- Residents are assured that this one-off funding can be carried over and spend over the next 18 months.

A resident recalled that in a previous meeting an example was used of the community care fund being allocated to pot holes and benches, as filling pot holes will reduce falls and benches can reduce loneliness.

- It was suggested that this was not the greatest example and this was used to highlight how the funding is not strictly restricted to the categories given and can be stretched to address specific needs of the community.

It was suggested that people in the local community are already doing far more work than litter picking, such as the work of the Friends of New Walk.

- The councillors recognise that this is not an ideal situation and they would not have chosen to do things this way. However, if local associations and residents groups do not take on more work then it simply won't get done.
- Cllr Taylor recognised the work of Friends of New Walk in the community and was grateful for this. Other organisations like this will need to spring up and there is potential to support them with funding.

A local resident and member of the St. Lawrence's Church council reminded the committee that St. Lawrence's Church Hall, where this meeting was taking place, was not exclusively for church purposes and is available as a community resource. The hall is currently used for community activities such as a lunch club for elderly residents. However, work needs to be done on facilities, particularly the floor and kitchen, and funding is hard to come by. The resident questioned whether ward funding could be used to make improvements to the hall allowing it to become a more valuable community resource.

- The councillors were aware of the work done at the church; however, as the ward becomes reliant on community work councillors need to establish a greater understanding of the specific work that is being undertaken. Cllr Taylor thanked this resident for bringing this point to his attention and will meet with them after the meeting to discuss this in more detail.

A local resident noted that the area has a growing student population and there was a great need to involve these students in the local community. It was questioned whether the committee will need to reach out to organisations such as the Red Cross and Age Concern.

- It was recognised that conversations are being had but this is new territory for councillors as well as residents. Work was being done with professionals in CYC and community groups to build up understanding and utilise this experience.

Looking at the community care fund, one resident raised concerns that people are not currently getting the care that they need, particularly when they have no family and their neighbours are also elderly. A particular example was given of an elderly resident was found on the floor after 15 hours and subsequently died. Alarms are noted as a possible solution, although there are also concerns that the community care fund is too small.

- The councillors are happy to look at help with care but need to know what currently exists.
- Another resident notes that alarms are available to people and CYC should be contacted for this.

A resident suggested one informal way of improving loneliness in the ward is street parties. The resident noted the success of their street parties and sees this as an informal way for people to get to know one another and

gage the needs of their local area. Citing issues in holding street parties, street party packs are suggested.

- While it was recognised that the basic idea has merit, it is noted that some people, particularly the elderly with the greatest needs, would be unable to engage which would be problematic for this idea.

A grounds maintenance list was distributed to residents. This list, produced by CYC, colour-codes maintenance work that is done with two categories:

- Red - work which requires technical expertise which the council could not expect local people to undertake.
- Green – tasks which could be carried out by the local community.
- Cllr Taylor noted that even if they residents undertake all the work highlighted in green, it still doesn't amount to the total of cuts, meaning some of the red tasks will still have to be left.

CYC sees this process as making funding a more open but will require residents to think outside the box and provide ideas about how projects could be completed in different and cheaper ways.

One resident saw no mention of Heslington Road and while there is mention of litter elsewhere on this list, there is no mention on Heslington Road, which the resident saw as a major issue.

- The councillors were aware of this issue and were picking litter yesterday. Cllr Taylor and Andy D'Agorne have asked Russell Stone (General Manager of Public Realm for CYC) for more information about the way that this list has been created. It was also noted that the references to litter picking in this list concern that in hedges and shrubbery, rather than on the pathways.

A resident brought the meeting's attention to the retreat bowling green which accounted for around one quarter of the current budget. Residents questioned whether this bowling green is a community resource and whether the retreat should take responsibility for this.

- The panel notes that this is a public community resource and has been since the bowling green was removed from the Barbican Centre.
- Russell Stone has advised Andy D'Agorne and Cllr Taylor that CYC will be taking a city wide review next year and the maintenance of the retreat bowling green has been identified for cuts but it is not yet clear if this will be included in the ward's list to make savings from – more information is being sought.

It was asked if the grounds maintenance list will be distributed to the email list but the councillors have concerns that more information needs to be provided, such as how regularly activities are done.

Residents questioned money spent from the ward's budget on St. George's car park as it is used by people from outside the area rather than residents. People pay to use the car park so surely some money is allocated for keeping it in good order?

- Cllr Taylor suggests that this would lead to questioning the way CYC runs finance. Money is raised by car parks but this is used to fund traffic highways infrastructure. It is also stated that the work done concerns hedges along the boundary, meaning it is part of the ward's budget.

Items on the green list are spread all over the ward – if no local group picks up item, what will happen?

- We can ask council for it to become part of the red list.
- Task will simply not be done.
- Committee could decide that funding come from the annual fund, but this cost would have to be accounted for every year.
- Ultimately, if it costs a lot the committee needs to see if it can be done in a cheaper way or with a mix of funding. However, Andy D'Agorne aware of this unsustainable scenario and suggests that maintenance spending will have to increase in the long run if day-to-day maintenance is not done and more serious problems arise.

Another large sum identified on this list was the clearing and breaking of leaves. It is suggested that money could be spent on a leaf blower and a building a composting site. It will be a lot of work but there is money to be spent to facilitate this work.

- A resident suggested that if it is everyone's job it is nobody's job and things will not get done or chances are it wont be done well. Concerns were raised about the potential loss of jobs but there was a suggestion that people from Brunswick could be employed to do these jobs – funds could be too small for this.

What do we need to do now?

- Explore direction of travel, taking the sheet home and talking to neighbours as more people need to be involved.
- Think about new solutions and contact Cllrs D'Agorne and Taylor with any suggestions.

#### **4. PLANNING PANEL UPDATE AND SELECTIONS**

Mike Wills told the meeting that since the Fishergate planning panel was reformed 18 months ago, the panel has grown and meetings now took place every 6 weeks.

The most controversial planning application in recent years has been the former petrol station on Fulford Road and there are plans for the planning panel members to speak at a committee hearing on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October on behalf of Fishergate.

- It was noted that officers have recommended refusal for this plan and the planning panel members will raise safety, traffic and environmental concerns.
- It was noted that a site visit is set to take place on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 11 am and locals were invited to attend and express concerns.

#### **Questions from residents to Mike Wills**

One resident was concerned that more trees are being cut down in the area and Mike Wills noted that trees in conservation areas need permission to be removed or trimmed but those not in conservation areas can be altered without permission. Mike Wills suggested that most applications concerning trees are along the riverside at Fulford Road or in the Barracks.

One resident raised issue with a particular planning application that received objection from residents and the planning panel. Mike Wills agreed with the residents concerns and notes that the panel saw the plan as inappropriate but their objections were over ruled and although he was sympathetic, no more could be done.

The current planning panel was confirmed to continue and there is scope for new members to join. People should contact Mike Wills for more information on this.

- Cllr Taylor added a note of thanks for the hard work that the panel has done.

## **5. HAVE YOUR SAY**

One resident raised issues with a strip of cobbles and a pot hole outside of their home. This hole at the end of Cemetery Road causes problems for cyclists who have to go around it and pedestrians who get soaked with water when it rains. There has been work done to patch the road further up, but the hole and cobbles have remained. Cllr Taylor recognised the safety concerns and will look into this issue further.

There is a forest of “To Let” signs along Heslington Road, some which have stayed all year round. There is suggestion of investigating by-laws can prohibit this.

- The councillors recognised this issue but have to work within national regulation. It was noted that other wards are also looking into this and in some places in the country, by-laws have been used. The panel agreed to look into this.
- Cllr Taylor also noted that letting agents previously signed up to a code of conduct agreeing to take signs down, although it appears that this has become lax. There is potential to ask companies to resign this agreement.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

People were invited to attend a tour of the St. Joseph’s Convent site on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

Fishergate ward is now on Twitter and people can follow @FishergateWard.

There were also apologies that some newspapers were delivered to the wrong address, meaning people didn’t have the dates for the Fishergate ward meeting.

The next meeting date is not yet fixed although it is expected to take place early in the New Year.

JONATHAN TYLER, independent facilitator