



ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Rotherhithe Community Council held on Wednesday 27 April 2011 at 7.00 pm at The Norwegian Church in London, 1 St.Olav's Square, London SE16 7JB

PRESENT: Councillor Jeff Hook (Chair)
Councillor Wilma Nelson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor David Hubber
Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor Catherine McDonald
Councillor Paul Noblet
Councillor Michael Situ

OFFICER SUPPORT: Forid Ahmed (Neighbourhood Co-ordinator)
Tim Cutts (Team Leader, Planning Policy)
Gill Kelly (Community Council Development Officer)
Tim Walker (Senior Engineer)
Christine Wildhaber (Principal Community Outreach Officer)
Gerald Gohler (Constitutional Officer)

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The chair welcomed councillors, members of the public and officers to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Columba Blango and Lisa Rajan; and from Simon Hughes, MP.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

5. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The chair explained that some amendments would need to be made to the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2011 with regards to the discussion around local schools.

Cllr Catherine McDonald explained the situation around Rotherhithe School. The council had previously received a formal letter from the government which had informed them that the funding of £19.6 million for Rotherhithe School, as part of Building Schools for the Future, had been withdrawn. However, a subsequent spreadsheet detailing schools to be funded, which had been received by council officers on 10 March 2011, had listed Rotherhithe School among the projects going ahead. A letter asking for urgent clarification on what funding was available and when had been sent to the Department for Education on 14 March 2011, but no formal response had been received. However, since this time a council officer had received a telephone call from the government agency responsible asking the council to resubmit their pupil place prediction.

RESOLVED:

That agreement of the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2011 be deferred to the next meeting.

6. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT AND COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Themed Council Assembly meetings

The chair announced that the next themed debate at council assembly would be in July, and would be about sport and young people. The date of the meeting was yet to be confirmed. The themed debate would provide an opportunity for residents to voice their opinions, via deputations, public questions or petitions. To allow councillors to receive feedback and views from the community, residents and young people officers would be holding meetings with young people, debates at community councils and various community forums events to discuss the issues. The chair encouraged residents to keep an eye on the website for further information at www.southwark.gov.uk/democracy

Launch of this year's Community Council Fund (CCF)

Gill Kelly, Community Council Development Officer, fed back that the application process for this year's Community Council Fund was now

open. £100 to £1000 per application could be applied for. The funding was for non-capital, and non-salary projects, such as events and fun days. Gill explained that the grants would have to be spent by 31 March 2012, and that the closing date for applications was 16 May 2011.

A resident asked about a Cleaner Greener Safer (CGS) project which had been granted in March 2010, but had not been delivered yet. Councillor Livingstone explained that unlike Community Council Fund grants, CGS allocations could be carried over to another financial year. The CGS team were working on the backlog of projects. No new CGS allocations were going to be made this year, but there were plans to reinstate the programme from 2012-2013, with new bids invited from late 2011.

Councillors asked for the CCF launch date to be looked into, as some residents' groups had lost out on funding for their St George's Day celebrations, because the fund was usually launched too late in the year. Cllr Livingstone responded that this would be looked into and informed the meeting that a belated St George's Day celebration was going to take place at Ilderton Primary School on Saturday 30 April 2011.

The Chair informed the meeting that the application period for capital projects under the Olympic Legacy Capital funding closed on 29 April 2011. Councillor Livingstone added that the target was to create £2m worth of legacy projects throughout the borough.

Canada Water Area Action Plan (AAP) and Residential Design Standards planning guidance

Tim Cutts, from the Planning Policy Team, informed the meeting that his team were currently consulting on two further changes to the Canada Water Area Action Plan (AAP): the introduction of minimum sizes for new homes, and the designation of three nature conservation sites (King's Stairs Gardens, Durand's Wharf and Deal Porters Walk). The council was also consulting on an update to the Residential Design Standards planning guidance which also included an increase in the minimum size of new homes. Both consultations ran until 2 June 2011. He encouraged people to give their view via the Southwark website, or on one of the paper forms he had brought along.

In response to a question from the floor, Tim explained that the AAP included a core area which consisted of the town centre, and a wider area whose western border was the west side of King's Stairs Gardens and Southwark Park. The AAP area also included the River frontage from King's Stairs Gardens to the border with Lewisham. Projects from the Section 106 Project Bank had been included in the AAP.

Concerns were raised that nature conservation sites already in existence were not enforced: some developers had received retrospective planning permission, and were encroaching on protected sites. A green link and 175 trees had been lost in Deal Porters Way. Councillor Noblet said that he

would raise this issue with Gary Rice, Head of Development Control, especially with regards to the retrospective planning permission.

In answer to questions from the floor, Tim explained that the proposed minimum home sizes were similar to the Parker Morris Standards, and to those stipulated in the London plan, and therefore bigger than the ones currently being built. However, these new standards could not be applied to outstanding planning applications which have been lodged before the new standards would be agreed. The council had originally proposed to add the minimum home sizes to its recently-adopted Core Strategy, but this had been rejected by the Planning Inspector.

Residents asked about the print works moving away from Harmworth Quays, and whether anything could be added to the AAP to prevent unsuitable, residential over-development of the area, which was to the detriment of local employment. Tim said that officers had had a meeting with the inspector and were waiting to hear back. A resident asked whether the planned relaxation of planning regulations regarding changes of use to residential use could impact on this site. Tim responded that that it could in theory, and that the council would give its views on this matter as part of the government's consultation which was ongoing until 30 June 2011.

The chair reminded people that encouraged people to give their views as part of the consultation on the Canada Water Area Action Plan and Residential Design Standards planning guidance.

Democracy Commission

Councillor Noblet informed the meeting about the work of the council's Democracy Commission which was presently looking at possible changes to community councils in the light of the £344,000 cuts which needed to be made in 2012/2013. The commission was looking at several options to achieve this including: changing the community council boundaries, changing the powers community council have and frequency of meetings, and how the meetings are structured. The commission was going to present its findings and recommendations to cabinet in January 2012. He encouraged residents to feed in their views via their ward councillors.

Cafe and art activities in Southwark Park

Bridget Virden, from Cafe Gallery Projects, informed the meeting about the learning projects she manages in the gallery and in their Dilston Grove location: family learning and allotment clubs, knitting, sewing, printing, drawing and dancing. These activities were low costs and there was no fee for joining. The sessions attracted about 18-20 participants which was also helped by the fact that the park was a safe and well-maintained space. There were summer workshops for young people during school holidays which aimed at building their self-esteem. The project had received funding from the community council and Bridget thanked the

meeting for this. The organisation would hold a fête at the Dilston Grove premises on 7 July 2011.

Marigold, from the London Bubble Theatre, informed the meeting about their production 'Blackbirds', which was the culminating performance of their year-long 'Grandchildren of the Blitz' project; a project that had focused on building up the wartime heritage of the area through setting up interviews between young people and elders in Rotherhithe, Bermondsey and Deptford. The performance would take place in Dilston Grove in Southwark Park from 9 May to 15 May.

There were three other major events happening in Southwark Park: Meditation in the Park on 8 May 2011, Photography in the Park on 26 June 2011, and Art in the Park on 9 October 2011 – all events were free and all were welcome.

The meeting heard that the park had improved, for example receiving the Mayor's safer parks award and a further blue flag award.

7. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were none.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATES (IF ANY)

PC Rebecca Lamb from Rotherhithe Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) informed the meeting that their ward priorities were burglary, drug dealing and using, and anti-social behaviour. She informed the meeting that the SNT was patrolling estates, and had changed their shifts to respond to the needs of the community. They had also referred young people to London Outreach, an organisation which took young people on outdoor trips and taught them useful skills. She invited residents to visit the SNT webpage for surgery details. In response to a question about staffing levels, she responded that two Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) had left, but a new PCSO and constable had started recently. There were currently no changes to the staffing levels proposed. In terms of the hot spots her team were focussing on, these were around Albion Street and Tissington Court.

PS Sharon Morgan, from the Surrey Docks SNT, informed the meeting that the team had been short-staffed since December, but that a new constable had now been appointed, and that they were waiting for a start date. In the intervening time, the team was working closely with the volunteer constables.

The chair reminded the meeting that the police always had a surgery before the community council meetings from 6.30pm.

Councillor Livingstone said that the SNTs in Southwark had done a very good job, and welcomed the fact that the structure of the teams would not

change, as had happened in other boroughs. He went on to warn residents that robberies from vehicles in Silwood Street and on the Tissington estate were on the increase.

9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

10. COMMUNITY UK POWER NETWORK - SOUTHWARK PARK

Bill Francis, Project Manager for UK Power Networks, gave an update about UK Power Networks' proposal to run a tunnel through a part of Southwark Park in order to connect a substations in White Chapel to a National Grid site in the south of the borough. The proposed shaft site in Southwark Park, from which the tunnel would be built, was currently being consulted on. This included letters being sent to local residents. The project was currently in the pre-planning application phase, and UK Power Networks would be meeting with the council's planning control department the following week.

Councillors asked which criteria had been used to determine the route of the tunnel and whether alternative routes/sites had been considered. Residents expressed several concerns about the size of the space needed for building works which was equivalent to 70% of a football pitch, and would threaten a wild flower meadow.

Bill Frances responded that as far as possible the tunnel was following the highway routes, but for geological reasons and because of the need for an appropriate crossing point at the Thames, this was not possible along the entire route.

A representative of Friends of Southwark Park criticised the fact that the group had not been consulted. Bill Francis said that the application was still in the process of being prepared, and that the Friends would be invited to comment as part of the planning application process.

Concerns were expressed about the loss of amenity and about traffic and building work disrupting the park and the surrounding area. Furthermore, residents criticised that UK Power Networks would retain a right of access to the tunnel, therefore inviting future disruption up to four times a year. This plan would set a dangerous precedent of public open land being ceded to a private company.

Responding to a question from the floor, Bill said about 20-30 lorries which would be using a temporary access way near China Hall gate, during the construction of the tunnel. A resident asked about the tunnelling technique which was going to be used, and whether a shaft for access and ventilation was going to remain after the works were completed. Bill Frances responded that a shaft would remain to guarantee access to the

25 metre deep tunnel, and that this kind of arrangement had also been made in a park in Brent.

Councillors asked that UK Power Networks look at alternative sites and share their investigations with residents. Bill said another location would be looked at.

11. SOUTHWARK PARK NURSERY (FISH FARM)

Christine Wildhaber from the council's Parks Department introduced this item explaining that the site has been derelict for the last ten years. There had been strong local feeling that it should be kept as an open space. In the 2009/2010 round of Cleaner Greener Safer (CGS) funding, the community council allocated £70,000 for the clearance and basic enhancement of the site. There had been some discussion around whether the space should be turned into a community garden, and around how best to get fully funded proposals. Further issues had been safeguarding the security of the site and the adjacent dwellings, access, vegetation and on-going costs including any voluntary sector interest.

Volunteer sector bodies had asked for the site to be cleared as access was difficult. This had now been done. Some funding was left which would be used for fencing on the site's southern border. Suggestions by the voluntary sector organisations for future uses included: allotments, community food growing, a community orchard, horticultural training, volunteers / environmental skills training, public open days – community events; and tree and plant nursery – biodiversity, community projects.

No decision had been made about the occupancy of the site. The main issues were possible set up costs, the council's fundraising capacity and sustainable income generation.

Answering questions from councillors, Christine explained that the fallback position would be having the space as a wildlife garden which be a low cost option. However, it was her understanding that some residents had expressed a view that another wildlife garden was not needed. Officers' priority had been to secure the site, but consultation was to follow. Allotments would be the most expensive option, because extensive works would be needed. She went on to say that the most important thing was secure fencing.

A representative of Friends of Southwark Park thanked officers for the clearing work, and supported the cafe facilities being improved. He urged all those involved to think big, and pursue lottery heritage funding.

There was a discussion about other possible sources of funding, including CGS funding originally allocated to projects which had fallen through, a possible consultation exercise about the site, and about securing the site by repairing the fencing.

A resident expressed the view that the café needed to be enlarged and facilities improved, including the provision of toilet facilities.

12. PARKING CHARGES BASED ON CARBON EMISSIONS / RESIDENTIAL PARKING

Tim Walker presented this item and explained that his team were consulting community councils on a proposal to base the residents' on-street parking charges on their vehicle's Co2 emissions. He said the proposal tied in with Southwark's commitment to promote sustainable forms of transport, and to reduce levels of air pollution resulting from road transport. Tim went on to present two options:

Option 1 was an across the board increase for all residents' permits. This would mean the cost of a residents parking permit will increase from £99.30 to £125.

Option 2 consisted of charging motorists for permits based on Co2 emissions, and engine size, if the vehicle pre-dates 2001. This meant cheaper permits for residents with low emission vehicles and higher charges for cars that emit more Co2. With this option 47% of car owners would be paying less for their permit than the Option 1 flat rate of £125. The scheme would be based on the DVLA Model with 6 bands.

Vehicles that pre-date 2001 would be charged on the vehicles cubic capacity. Vehicles of CC less than 1600 will pay less than option 1. With this option 42% of car owners would be paying less for their permit than the Option 1 flat rate of £125. Vehicles of CC more than 1600 will pay more.

Tim invited people's views on the options. These which would be fed back to cabinet member for consideration. If agreed by the cabinet member, the scheme would be implemented from in May/June 2011. Existing permits would be changed over when they expire.

The chair clarified that there would be an increase in the charges regardless of the option chosen. The difference was how the increase would be paid for. Responding to questions by councillors and members of the public, Tim explained that the proposals would only affect on-street parking in Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ), and would also not disadvantage trades people. He went on to explain that the Community Councils were the only forums being consulted. The decision would be taken as a cabinet member decision, so councillors could make representations about this.

Concerns were raised that while councillors were keen to put in practice green measures, people who could not afford to change their cars would be impacted negatively by option 2.

Councillors and members of the public discussed the merits and disbenefits of the two options, including the potential cost of implementing the new system. The chair asked members of the public for an indication by show of hands which of the two options they preferred. The Chair announced that there had been a small majority in favour of option two.

13. KING STAIRS GARDENS - FEEDBACK FROM THAMES WATER

Nick Tennant, Communications Manager from Thames Tunnel, informed the meeting that the first phase of the consultation had been completed in January 2011 and a feedback report, which was also available on-line, had been published on 31 March 2011. A presentation had also been made to King's Stairs Garden Action group.

As a result of the consultation the overall number of sites needed may be reduced by three, including the Druid Street site. In terms of King's Stairs Gardens, an alternative, brown-field site at Chambers Wharf had become available and had been acquired by Thames Tunnel and St James Homes. This could now be considered as an alternative site, and was being explored further.

Consultation around the site would be undertaken and exploratory drilling in the riverbed was currently being conducted. The revised plans would be published in autumn at which time the preferred site would be announced. This would be followed by a new round of consultation. Planning applications were scheduled to be submitted in June 2012. Thames Water would try to help deliver jobs and skills for young people in the area with a jobs and skills forum which were open to all.

Some residents said they were pleased with the developments regarding Chambers Wharf and thanked the King's Stairs Gardens Action group for their work in this matter.

Responding to a question from councillors, Nick explained that Thames Water would exercise due diligence, and that the tunnels would be lower than the Jubilee line tunnels. Therefore, no subsidence or similar problems were expected.

14. UPDATE ON SELCHP (SOUTH EAST LONDON COMBINED HEAT AND POWER FACILITY)

David Gee, Energy Programme Manager, gave a presentation about proposals for the Southwark heat network. He explained that this project could deliver hot water and heat to homes in Southwark using low carbon, renewable, efficient energy. It would be delivering significant environmental benefits, e.g. an 80% reduction in the Co2 output by the affected estates.

The project would deliver significant cost savings in terms heating bills and

maintenance of boiler houses. The project was in its early stages in which its feasibility was being assessed. An agreement was scheduled for late 2011, and pipes scheduled to be laid in 2012/13. Operations could start in 2013/14. The route of the pipes included a section through one edge of Southwark Park. The trench required would be 50cm wide and 1.5 metres deep. More consultation would be undertaken with the homeowners council, the friends of Southwark park and with Rebecca Towers and Des Waters in the parks department.

David emphasised that the project would only go ahead if there was a net saving in terms of heating costs to residents.

Responding to questions from residents, David explained that it was envisaged for 3,000 homes on Rouel Road, Keatons, Four Squares, Pedworth, Abbeyfield, Tissington and Silverlock estates to form part of the project, with other estates to follow in due course. This was currently subject to negotiations.

A suggestion was made to include Osprey, Plough Way, Yeoman Street and Chilton Grove Estates in the scheme. Queries were raised about

- whether leaseholders would have pay towards the construction cost
- whether TRAs had been consulted
- whether an alternative route outside of Southwark Park was being explored, so that the old trees would not be damaged
- whether this scheme meant an end to boiler rooms on estates

David explained that the trenches would not be deep, and that he would take these comments on board. TRAs would be consulted along with the leaseholder council. The old boiler houses would be used to house the heat exchanges which would connect the estates to SELCHP, and the backup systems. He explained that the operators of the plant had previously agreed to explore providing this source of heat in an agreement with the council, and that other estates could come on stream later.

15. CONSULTATION ON THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LONDON BRIDGE STATION 5 YEAR PLAN

Simon Brooks, Communications Manager for Network Rail, spoke to the meeting about the refurbishment of London Bridge station over the coming years. The works would allow more trains to pass through the station by creating more 'through' platforms. The plans also included a new concourse at street level, allowing access from the north and south of the station. He presented the proposed design of the new parts of the station.

He explained the project's timeline this was as follows:

- 17-21 May 2011 – public exhibition at London Bridge station, articles in local press and writing to local residents
- Summer 2011 – submit planning application
- Autumn / Winter 2011 – planning application decision
- 2012 – 'enabling' work – e.g. cable relocation

- 2013 – start construction (St. Thomas Street side)
- 2018 – station redevelopment complete

Residents suggested the plans needed more green features like trees and planters, and a green terrace. There were concerns raised about the predominance of glass and concrete in the proposed development, and about rain water run off. Concerns were also raised that the loss of the cul-de-sac platforms formed part of the reason why the ‘South London loop’ train was to be scrapped.

In response to further questions, Simon responded that Weston Street and Stainer Street would no longer be available to traffic, as they would be forming part of the new access to, and the new concourse of the station. A lot of the historical frontage (some of which had a blue plaque) would be retained. In terms of the ‘South London loop’, Simon explained that the responsibility of running services lay with the department for transport and train operators. The plans meant that the London Blitz experience would have to move, but not the London Dungeon. No change would be made to the tube station, and the connection between the Northern and Jubilee lines.

16. LOCAL PARKING AMENDMENTS

Executive Function

RESOLVED:

That the following local parking amendment, detailed in the appendix to this report, be approved for implementation subject to the outcome of any necessary statutory procedures:

- Hawkestone Road – Install one new loading only bay and extend the length of an existing permit bay and “at any time” waiting/loading restrictions

The chair thanked everyone for coming and for contributing to the meeting, and announced that details of the next meeting would be agreed at next Council Assembly meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: