



**COMMUNITY COUNCILS**  
A voice for your community



## **Walworth Community Council**

### **Main Meeting**

Draft Minutes of the meeting of Walworth Community Council

subject to approval at the next meeting

Wednesday May 7 2008

Thurlow Lodge Community Hall, Thurlow Street, Walworth SE17 2UZ

*Please note all text in italics is an addition to the minutes after the meeting.*

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#### **Present**

Councillors: Abdul Mohamed (Chair), Lorraine Lauder (Vice-Chair), Kirsty McNeill, Paul Bates, James Gurling, Jelil Ladipo, Caroline Pidgeon, Martin Seaton and Jane Salmon

The meeting opened at 7.05pm.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence in advance were submitted for the latter half of the meeting on behalf of Councillors Pidgeon and Gurling who needed to leave early.

#### **3. Notification of any items the Chair deems urgent**

None were notified.

#### **4. Disclosure of Members' interests and dispensations**

Councillor Seaton declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the items concerning the Aylesbury estate. Councillor Bates declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the item on the Creation Trust.

#### **5. Chair's announcements:**

- ☐ The Chair announced that the Community Council Fund for 2008-9 had £15,000 available for Walworth community groups to bid for small events of community benefit, such as children's parties or fun days. Application forms for grants for between £100 and £1,000 were available from Ambrose Omoma. The closing date for applications will be June 2 2008.
- ☐ The Chair announced that there was a display for the Aylesbury Area Action Plan at the back of the room, residents are invited to view the display and ask any questions during the break.

#### **6. Confirmation of minutes from the last main meeting**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Main meeting held on March 23 2008 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Responses to the Public Questions from the minutes were circulated at the meeting.

#### **7. Deputations and petitions:** None received.

#### **Main business:**

#### **8. Elephant & Castle/Stead Street redevelopment:**

- ☐ Jim Rossiter of the Friends of Nursery Row Park asked how development of part of the park was consistent with the Southwark Plan. The Planning Inspector appears to have approved the development. Jon Abbott said that the remainder of the park was now designated as urban open space – it is always difficult to strike a balance between conflicting demands.

- ❑ A resident said that taking 20% of the park was a shame, and seemed to be breaking every tenet of land use in the Southwark Plan, as the park will be reduced to a square. Jon Abbott said that there is a need to rehouse Heygate residents, as part of the wider objectives.
- ❑ Councillor McNeill said to the Friends of Nursery Row Park that the Council wanted to protect the park.
- ❑ Mr Dennison said that the consultation around the building on 17% of Nursery Row Park was totally inadequate. The surrounding estates (Peabody, Rodney and Browning) as well as other local residents, the very people most affected by this loss, were not 'consulted' until it was too late in 2007. Jon Abbott said that the Council's Planning department was responsible for the consultation, however the consultation carried out was more extensive than the law requires.
- ❑ Ms Cronin said she supported the Nursery Row Park Friends; even though she had taken part in the consultation, she didn't know what 'Rodney Road 1' was, and that the park was to be built on. The Inspector's report should be reread as it contained some inaccuracies and objectors to the redevelopments would have a supportable challenge. The proposals keep changing in the number of units to be built and the proportion of social housing to private housing. She has asked for further details. She felt there is some confusion about the open space, as the Inspector claimed the scheme would lead to better provision. Jon Abbot responded that the Planning Inspector had walked around the sites, so knew the site. The park is now allocated under the Southwark Plan, and Jon said he is now tasked to work with the Housing Associations to maximize the number of affordable housing units. Anyone who disagrees with the proposals should object using the statutory planning process. There were no allocated green spaces before, but now these spaces have protection under the Southwark Plan. The loss of part of the park would lead to a greater gain in the future.
- ❑ A resident said that there is a problem with the lights in Nursery Row Park; he had fallen over due to the lack of lighting. Jon Abbott said that this was a question for Jon Shaeff, who is in charge of Walworth parks.

**Action: Jon Shaeff**

- ❑ Ms Helen O'Brien said that she lived in the Heygate and was being forced to move due to the developers. She said she had sympathy for the Nursery Row residents, but she has to live somewhere. The space taken from the park was for 165 units for sale. The new homes will not be as good as those residents live in now. The Housing Associations have been slow to submit planning applications, so some Heygate tenants will have to move twice. Why are so many units for sale? Jon Abbot responded that in defence of the Housing Associations, the scheme has not attracted a subsidy from the Housing Corporation, so the Council is having to use its own land, leasing it at a peppercorn rent, and the Housing Associations are having to fund the development themselves and they are using the sale of the private units to fund the affordable homes. One planning application has been submitted and with the Planning Unit. Some sites have been lost. The number of units of private and/or social housing is dependent on the planning decision.
- ❑ A resident asked what is going to happen on the Heygate footprint? She said she was concerned that the Council would not be able to finish the scheme. Jon Abbott said that there was an enormous demand for affordable housing and the Council is bound not to release land that has value. There is no guarantee that the scheme will be completed, but there is full intent that that should happen. There are still transport issues to be resolved with Transport for London. The amount of affordable housing is purchased by the sale of Council owned land; essentially, the Council is buying affordable units.
- ❑ Councillor McNeill asked why the process has gone on so long, as she thought the process was going to be fast tracked. Planning officers were supposed to have been allocated to work solely on this scheme. Jon Abbott said that the delays were due to the Housing Associations not being able to form contracts immediately as this is a not-for-profit scheme. Contract formation was taking longer and was more difficult than anticipated, and there are a large number of sites. There is no point in submitting planning applications for schemes that are not economically viable. Jon Abbott also said that he was loath to commit to a timetable. There is a senior planning officer working on the scheme, together with individual planning officers.
- ❑ The Chair asked if there was a steering committee for the Heygate site. Jon Abbott responded that there is now the Heygate Housing Team.
- ❑ Mr Beadell asked when the consultations on the Stead Street/Nursery Row proposals took place; also the size of the sites may preclude an environmental impact assessment. Jon Abbott said that the Planning Policy Team carried out the consultation. Whether an Environmental Impact Assessment was required was a matter for the Planning department to decide, but any site over half a hectare requires an Assessment.

**Action: Caroline Chalklin (dates of consultation)**

- ❑ Mr Crawford asked what had happened to the Elephant & Castle Trust. **Action: Jon Abbott**
- ❑ Mr Crawford asked that designers of the new library at Elephant & Castle visit the Ideas Store in the Mile End Road, Tower Hamlets, as this was a model of how a new library should be.
- ❑ Mr Flynn asked if trading the land value would lead to a net gain during the redevelopment of Elephant & Castle, and would there be 1100 units? Jon Abbott said that there would be.

- ❑ Mr Flynn asked why Southwark keeps publishing new timetables of progress, which then have to be rewritten when the deadlines slip. Jon Abbott apologised, saying that the Council wanted to give the best information available at the time, but there is always uncertainty in development.
- ❑ A resident asked for further clarity on the lack of subsidy, if there is an addition to social housing. Jon Abbott explained that the Housing Corporation normally gives a subsidy for new social housing, but in this case, they are not giving a subsidy. There is no possibility of changing this.
- ❑ Mr Beadell said the new buildings have ten storeys. Jon Abbott said that the Housing Associations are working on the final details.

Questions and comments submitted in written form only:

- ❑ Mr Dennison said that the developers should not be allowed to exempt themselves from an Environmental Impact Assessment on the Stead Street development as it (the development) takes almost 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the Nursery Row Park with no extra local provision; an obvious environmental impact. (Written)
- ❑ Mr Beedell said that if the St Mary Newington Park is very important for the local people (quotation from the speech at the opening of St Mary Newington Park) and looks very nice for the new plan of the regeneration of the Elephant & Castle! Why is Nursery Row Park of no importance for local people and the future residents coming into the area, when our green space is taken away and building is planned on part of the park. Are our children not deserving a place to run and the community to meet in a safe environment? (Written)
- ❑ Mr Dennison said that an ex-Councillor gave a commitment that the proposal will not affect the park in any form. (Written)
- ❑ Mr Flynn said that he understood that only half of the total of early housing site homes will be used for Heygate residents: approximately 435 or so. How then will the commitment to building 1100 social rented homes in the Elephant redevelopment be met? (Written)
- ❑ Ms Snelgrove said that she felt that Rodney Road's shops and their continuation is vital, not only for herself, but for the many other residents. As we no longer have any other shops left on this road and as you can see from the petition of which several hundred residents have signed we are objecting to the Council's proposed demolition. Relocation or loss of these last remaining amenity shops. It is a disgrace that the Council is working against the wishes of its own resident and proposing to deprive us of our basic amenity and essential services that these local shops provided. The Council is undemocratic and unjust proposals to demolish or relocate these shops is not acceptable, and will also bring much hardship to many elderly residents, and therefore it beggars belief that this Council and local Councillors are doing nothing to protect our only local shops in and around Rodney Road. (Written)

9. **Aylesbury Area Action Plan:** This item was withdrawn, but residents were invited to speak to Annabel Sidney during the tea break.

10. **Creation Trust:**

The Trust has been established as a successor to the Aylesbury New Deal for Communities Board, so that the work of the NDC will not just stop at the end of the funding period. The NDC Board consists of a resident led partnership board of 23 with 16 residents nominated by TRAs. The Chair and Vice-Chair are both residents, and so far 50 projects have been formulated.

Amongst the successes of the NDC are the educational projects which have included Revision Clubs, After School Clubs and Holiday Clubs; these projects mean that 50% of children in the area attempting GCSEs will gain 5 good passes (A\*-C). Before the NDC, 1 in 6 children gained 5 good GCSE passes. Projects have also included sports and activities, and the children attending have reported feeling valued. Academically, children are doing 3 times as well as before the NDC began its work.

The NDC has been successful because it has provided a voice for residents to workers with various agencies, so that local services are tailored to what residents want.

The Council is responsible for the physical changes in the area, but Creation will continue to provide a voice for residents. Creation is a limited company, but has charitable status; hence it has to fund economic and social support for the area.

The Board will consist of: 4 residents elected by TRAs, 4 workers from agencies (such as the Council) and 4 other people with relevant specific skills – who can be Aylesbury residents. In the last Creation Newsletter, residents were asked to apply for the places for 'other people with specific skills', and some applications have been received.

Residents want:

- ❑ A choice of housing type and location
- ❑ Good sizes homes
- ❑ Affordable rents and service charges
- ❑ Rapid change
- ❑ Physical changes to be accompanied by economic change.

Creation will develop social and community activities, and attempt to raise money to fund 'unfundable' projects.

Through the hard work of residents on the NDC Board in negotiating with outside agencies, when Aylesbury estate residents are moved, there will be a comprehensive housing policy, a commitment to larger room sizes and an extra bedroom, options for leaseholders. The Trust has now secured the William IV public house, and is negotiating for the Amersham site.

The following questions were asked:

- ❑ The Chair asked how much Creation will inherit from the NDC. Steve Pearce said that nothing would be inherited, but the NDC will approve funding for Creation projects. Any funds unspent by the NDC will remain with the Government, so it is important that all NDC funds are spent prior to the end of the NDC. Investment has been made in buildings such as St Peter's and the First Place.
- ❑ A resident asked if the Creation Trust would manage the assets. Steve Pearce said that some assets would be managed by other agencies.
- ❑ A resident expressed concern at the governance of NDC successor bodies, such as the Shoreditch Trust. How was it possible for tenants and residents to have ownership of Creation? Steve Pearce said local community organisations operate different forms of governance and some have elections. Some organisations do not have elections initially, in order to establish themselves with some stability. Residents will be able to speak at their TRA meetings, or speak to their Councillors or to those residents with special skills. There will also be a User Group for the William IV and for the Amersham building. The Trust is committed to review its governance and to accept representations from residents.
- ❑ A resident asked if people are listening to what tenants want, there could be a conflict of interest. Steve Pearce said that representatives come from TRA committees, which are elected at AGMs. They are representatives of the local community, and voted into their positions. Representatives on the NDC and Creation Trust do more for the community than anyone else, and the policies agreed by the Council are due to the hard work of community representatives.
- ❑ A resident said that the NDC was very successful in its work with youth, but what happens to the young people when their families move away from the Aylesbury. Steve Pearce said that the Council was responsible for the redevelopment, and could just decant Aylesbury resident, but the TRA representatives argued and won the right to move back to the estate.
- ❑ Mr Beadell asked what are Creation's views on parent Governors? Steve Pearce said that the NDC invests in schools and works with schools. There are also some NDC activities supporting parent Governors.
- ❑ Mr Corbyn said that people just outside the Aylesbury Area are excluded from any sort of consultation. Steve Pearce responded that Mr Corbyn was involved in consultation, and is aware of what is going on. In response to Mr Corbyn's comments about election of directors and decision-making, Steve Pearce said that the Board use exactly the same protocols as the Council; two members of the Board have declared an interest and withdrawn from items under discussion.
- ❑ A resident asked why the estate was going to be demolished, when all is so good. Steve Pearce said that the Council was responsible for the physical changes to the estate. However, he commented that when people's lives improve, they tend to move away from the estate. There is a need to combine both the social investment through Creation/the NDC with the physical improvements.
- ❑ A resident asked if it would be possible to be on the Board and also be a campaigner against demolition and for Council housing. She expressed concern that Board members were subject to gagging agreements. Steve Pearce said that NDC Board members are required to abide by a Code of Conduct; however, no member is constrained from campaigning for Council housing. NDC Board members are trying to move the area forward. There is nothing in the Code of Conduct, which would prevent this. The Code of Conduct would require Board members to nominate a spokesperson to speak for the Board itself; this is to prevent inaccurate reporting.
- ❑ Mr Amir asked how Council tenants get into employment; there is a huge problem with welfare dependency in the area. Steve Pearce said that the vast majority of residents on the Aylesbury estate want to work, and the NDC has been helping them train, and have made links with local employers to try to give the maximum employment opportunities to local people.
- ❑ Mr Amir asked where people will get Council houses.

- ❑ Councillor Seaton said that as an East Walworth Councillor he felt that Board members could be drawn from the periphery, so that those Walworth residents could feel ownership. He complimented the TRA representatives on the Board as an example of effective community action. Councillor Seaton said he had a young family, and he was glad of the excellent local schools, especially Michael Faraday School.

**11. Police update:**

Sergeant Mark Stevens of the Faraday Safer Neighbourhood Team spoke of the recent murder of a young man in Newington Ward. He assured residents that the police were working hard to apprehend the person responsible. Sgt Stevens asked any residents who had any information to contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Residents are asked to attend Ward Panels to help the Safer Neighbourhood Teams set their priorities. The dates of the Ward Panels are:

Faraday – July 14 2008 at 6:30pm at Taplow  
Newington – July 23 2008 at Walworth Police Station  
East Walworth – May 5 at Walworth Police Station

A resident asked why so little has been done since the death of Daniola Taylor. Sergeant Stevens responded that Safer Neighbourhood Teams are required to do more work with young people, and have to consult with young people about their requirements. The Safer Neighbourhood Team works with the local Council on reducing crime and disorder.

**12. Public Questions:**

- ❑ Mr Noble asked why the Council did not make Comus House safe and secure. **Action: Tracy Dickinson**
- ❑ Mr Taite said that the Safer Neighbourhood Team and the NDC were doing a great job.
- ❑ Mr Beedell asked why some Cleaner Greener Safer schemes were done quickly, such as projects at Manchester and Sutherland Houses, and Comus House requests always ignored. **Action: Tracy Dickinson**
- ❑ Mr/Ms Dennis asked about a particular application for funding to the NDC by an individual. As this is about an individual, it is not an appropriate question for a public forum if Mr Dennis has concerns he should contact Steve Pearce.

**Signed:**

**Date:**