

Minutes of Semilong Community Forum meeting February 14th 2007

Present: Alistair Melton, Ally Dunn, Cllr Lee Barron, Daphne Barritt, Jen Kenny, Steven Richards, Zoë Martin, Mrs Thompson, Pratimah Khedow, Peter Slack, Elizabeth French, Clare Bunting, Dick Post, Andy Tyrer, Rachel Duncan, Sarah Digby PCSO, Jon Moffett (PCSO), Steven Sage, Ruth Taylor, Alan Taylor, Sgt Paul Valentine, Lucy Liesowic, Adrian Arnold (WNDC) Zoë Downes, Margaret Honeybun

Apologies: Andy Langton Brian Crutchley, Rob Chadwick, Kate Wills, Ron Frater

Abbreviations Used:

SCF - Semilong Community Forum

NBC – Northampton Borough Council

NCC – Northamptonshire County Council

AGYCC – Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre

MUGA-Multi use games area (at the bottom of Semilong Road)

WDNC-West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

PCSO- Police community support officer

The meeting opened at 7.33pm and was chaired by Zoë Martin

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising from the last meeting 6/12/2006

Zoë to ask Andy Langton re litter bins

Zoë has done this and a new bin has been installed.

Zoë to contact Lee Barron re: Post office redevelopment

Zoë has done this and Lee Barron attended 14/2/07 meeting

Ron is going to see about more CCTV notices near the phones to deter gangs from hanging round there

Ron was not present to report on this

Further actions outstanding from previous minutes

Brian to contact social club re reduction in rate.

Brian was away so could not update

Barrack Road Sorting Office.

Cllr Lee Barron announced the start of a consultation period about the Royal Mail Sorting Office building on the Barrack Road. He gave some background to the building and said that it will be the largest development that Semilong has seen. Lee explained that he is one of 6 councillors that sit on the development corporation to oversee developments and their affect on the community he is an elected representative.

The building has not been sold yet. Any interested parties will speak to Royal Mail and the the West Northants development corporation will look at the planning application. Under the terms of this they must state what benefit they will bring to the local community.

Lee explained that this is just the very beginning of the process and that hopefully the next time he attends he will be able to bring the buyer to discuss the needs of the community.

Adrian Arnold outlined the role of the WDNC he said that they have been given the power to determine which planning applications are accepted rather than the NBC. There are only 3 similar corporations in the country. Adrian explained that their remit is to make sure that a development delivers quality.

- o They must follow government guidelines re: climate change/sustainability/green issues
- o Engagement is now of primary importance this means they have to talk with the developer who must demonstrate how they have taken the community's views into account.
- o This all takes part before the application is submitted
- o The WNDC is also involved in gaining more community money and wider ranging contributions from developers.
- o Once the application is in they again ensure engagement with the local community.

Peter Slack asked whether the development would include social housing. Adrian said that 35% of the development needs to be affordable housing. He said that they would work with housing officers to discuss the needs of the community. It may be that case that there will be shared ownership properties.

Clare Bunting also voiced concerns over an increase in social housing.

The forum discussed what is meant by affordable housing and the difficulties of first time buyers getting on the property ladder were highlighted.

Zoë Downes explained that East Midlands housing association for example had shared ownership properties in Semilong which were helping people buy first properties.

Dick Post asked Adrian what powers the WNDP had to enforce developers planning gain. Adrian explained that ultimately planning permission could be refused. He said that they are looking for very high figures of money for communities.

Paul Valentine said that he heard they had been successful in spending money to improve communities. He asked whether the Castle station development would also be giving money to Semilong. There are also some old school sites that are being developed and that the money could be pooled for a bigger project.

Zoë asked if people had any comments on whether they would like to see the building demolished. Adrian explained that the WNDP would ask developers to prove why this would be beneficial considering the economic cost of doing so.

Zoë asked Adrian if there have been any interested parties yet. Adrian said that there have been a number of interested bodies. Mrs Honeybun asked if that was for the building or the site and Adrian said the site.

Zoë asked if it would be purely residential or mixed use. Adrian said that if the developer only intended one use, then they would be asked why.

Peter Slack asked who actually oversees the consultation as he had been unhappy with the Millers meadow consultation as he wasn't sure that they had taken the views into account. Adrian said that the developers would be encouraged to use independent communication bodies to consult the community; he said this had been successful for other projects.

Ally asked if we would be visited by any interested parties before permission was given. Adrian explained that they would have a preferred bidder and that this bidder would be the one that would come and talk to the community, but that they would still be subject to contract.

Peter Slack asked if money from the planning gain was banked or allocated straight away. Adrian said that payments would normally be made in stages as this could result in a bigger payment altogether. He said that it would depend on what the immediate needs of the community are.

Zoë said that if anyone had any questions or queries to put to the WNDP then they could contact the forum.

Actions no actions

Events

Lucy Liesowic said that there is a basketball even taking place on Saturday at the MUGA featuring a police basketball team .Ally said that she would try and get it publicised on the radio and it should also be in the Evening Chronicle.

Lucy urged members to give their support

Actions no actions

Neighbourhood Warden - Andy Langton

Andy was not present to report .Lee Barron reassured members that funding was safe for community wardens.

Actions

Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre

Steven reported that the centre is still waiting for an update on funding from the NBC.

Actions

No actions

Events

Zoë said that she will be attending Spring Boroughs to see their community event and get ideas for our own event.

Actions

No actions

Treasurers update

Steven said that the balance is still £490 he is still waiting for the bank account to be opened.

Actions

Brian to chase the room rates.

Environment Green

Rob who was not present had fed back to Zoë and said that the new pathways and play area should be completed by the end of march. Oliver Henry also wanted top put on a series of events when the amphitheatre is completed. Members were urged to come forward with ideas.

Zoë explained that in light of the friends of the racecourse getting their funding, they have asked the forum to suggest an exercise station nearest the Semilong end of the racecourse. Zoë explained what a trim trail was. Mrs Thompson recalled having seen a similar project in Linford woods in Milton Keynes. Steve Sage suggested that maybe the trail could have a number of difficulty levels or time limits e.g. bronze silver and gold , in order to make the trail challenging.

Actions

No actions this month

Environment Urban

Rob reported the problems with the cash machine at the co-op at the time of the meeting he had not received a response.

The substation has been tidied up

Members were urged to continue reporting instances of fly tipping.

Mrs Thompson said she was concerned about an increase in dog dirt on the streets. Paul Valentine said that a fixed penalty fine can be given of £80, but evidence such as a photograph is needed.

Ally said that there has been a car break in and Marriot street had not been cleaned up after this for at least 10 days. She wondered whose responsibility it was, Zoë said she would ask Andy. Residents also discussed the recent non collection of card following the heavy snow. Zoë said she had checked with the council and that they had informed that the card would not be collected in the local press.

The outline planning permission for flats on the Highgrade Motors site has now been agreed.

Thanks to Brian it is likely that we will get the pelican crossing as well. Paul Valentine asked whether there was any other funding to be had , Zoë said she would ask Rob

Actions

Zoë will check with Andy re cleaning up car break in

Zoë will ask Rob to check on 106 funding re Highgrade motors flats

Actions

No actions this month

Communication

Brian wasn't available to report

Actions no actions this month

Crime

Paul Valentine said that Operation Nailed was going to be continuing over the next few weeks. He said that the safer communities teams had been instrumental in gathering intelligence.

Sgt Valentine said that there was a review of prostitution in the area and that strategies such as an automated number plate recognition camera had been on trial in Quorn way and had been successful in giving police the chance to chase up repeat offenders in the area.

There has been a threefold increase in arrests of kerb crawlers, which is more than the last 3 years altogether.

The Safer Communities Team is also working more closely with SWAN and there is a dedicated police officer who liaises with them. There is a new policy of stopping any new sex workers which hopefully will stop the supply of new women and enable case management of existing girls.

There has been a baseline study of street sex workers, it is estimated that there are around 50/60 regulars which is a significant reduction from 2001. They are committed to reduce this number further working with SWAN to encourage them to interact with local services such as GPs , if they refuse to seek help then SWAN will ask the police to issue a ban .

The benefits of having the same officers working in the same place have been highlighted and they will be asking CASPAR plus for further funding to allow this strategy to continue.

Mrs Thompson asked which number she should call if she is disturbed at night by girls and men outside her property. The number to call is 700 700 residents can ask to be put through to the Safer communities team, but it was stressed that this is not the number to call in a real emergency as it would not be an immediate response.

They can also be emailed SCTCastle@northants.police.uk

The dispersal order ended on December 8th 2006 Steve said he wasn't sure it was a good idea to advertise the end date as he thought youths were now slowly starting to gather round the co-op area again. Sarah stressed that the dispersal order can be applied for again and it is a fairly straightforward procedure which means that we should be able to act sooner to avoid a recurrence of the problems seen over the summer at the MUGA. The forum agreed that the dispersal order had been successful in reducing incidents over the time it was in force.

Lee Barron said that there were further plans to improve the community and that the real test will be in April/May. Sgt Valentine also said that of course we would still have the safer communities team.

AOB

Sarah asked if she could arrange for a neighbourhood watch officer to come to a meeting to give a presentation The forum agreed.

Peter Slack said that there should be more liaison with Kate Wills who writes our local column in the Chronicle, as events in the area the basketball event had not been publicised.

The meeting was closed at 9.00pm

Actions

The next meeting is on 14th March 2007 at the BBOB Rugby Club on St. Andrews Road at 7.30 – 9.30pm

Minutes Agreed (signed)

Chair _____ Date _____

Secretary _____ Date _____