

Northfleet and Gravesend West Neighbourhood Forum

Tuesday, 23 February 2010, 7pm

Venue – Shears Green Junior School, White Avenue, Northfleet, Gravesend, DA11 7JB

Present:

Chair: Mr Leslie Christie, Kent County Councillor for Northfleet and Gravesend West Division

Vice Chair: Cllr Jane Cribbon

Coldharbour: Cllr Susan Howes

Northfleet North: Cllr Ronald Bowman, Cllr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesei

Northfleet South: Cllr John Loughlin

Painters Ash: Cllr Les Howes, Cllr Harold Craske, Cllr Adrian Warburton

Pelham: Cllr Jane Cribbon

Woodlands: Cllr William Dyke, Cllr Anthony Pritchard, Cllr Michael Wenban

Officers present:

Kevin Burbidge Director (Business) Gravesham Borough Council (GBC)

Tony Chadwick Principal Planning Officer, Planning & Regeneration Services, GBC

Will Farmer Community Liaison Manager, KCC

Jackie Denton Community Engagement Officer, GBC

Chris Wakeford Committee & Scrutiny Assistant, GBC

+ 40 members of the public and organisations (56 attendees in total)

1. Apologies

Cllr Rosemary Leadley, Cllr Derek Sales, Cllr Andrea Webb

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Harold Craske and Cllr Tony Pritchard declared a personal but non- prejudicial interest in Item 4. Neighbourhood Forum Grants owing to the fact that both are representatives on the Board of Northfleet Age Concern.

Cllr Ronald Bowman and Cllr Susan Howes declared a personal but non- prejudicial interest in Item 4. Neighbourhood Forum Grants owing to the fact that both are representatives on the Board of Dial North West Kent.

3. Gritting, winter maintenance and repair of highways in Northfleet and Gravesend West.

Response to the recent snow and ice by Kent Highways Services (KHS)

Leslie Christie introduced the topic by reading out Nick Chard's response to the policy overview committee, and encouraged discussions in relation to KHS response to the recent snow and ice in the area. The response of the forum will be fed back to KHS, into the review of the winter response carried out by KHS in the summer 2010.

Group Discussion Feedback

Table 1

- Outside local shops and schools were not salted properly.
- All Roads should be supplied with salt bins.
- KHS need to communicate/co-ordinate better with Gravesham Council, local knowledge is important
- Sports fields need to be salted.

Table 2

- There have been 100s of complaints on potholes, why have these not been dealt with sooner?
- Gritting plan needs to be amended ASAP to reflect local needs.
- School areas, sheltered housing and pavements need to be salted.
- Better communication between KCC and GBC.

Table 3

- What were the accident statistics during the snow period?
- KCC and KHS were not properly prepared.
- Need more salt in vulnerable areas.

Table 4

- Pavements were a big problem with snow and ice creating dangerous conditions.
- Residents were stealing all the salt from the designated bins.
- Should you clear the area outside your house; can you be sued if someone has an accident?
- Bus stops need to be salted.

Table 5

- Main roads were good, but getting to those roads was very difficult.
- Selective salting was inadequate.
- No schools open - education suffered, but fun was had in the snow.
- Potholes – big problem.

Table 6

- Main roads good, footpaths poor.
- What was the cost to the NHS?
- More salt bins please.
- Parked cars prevent grit from reaching the pavements.
- Myth: that you can be sued if you clear the snow on your path/outside your home.
- More salt for the elderly care homes please.
- Big thanks to the all the hard work during the cold snap.

Table 7

- Pavements need salting.
- Potholes!
- Bring back old grit bins.

Table 8

- Gritting of the bus routes was a big issue.
- Need 'satellite' depots of salt.
- Disappointing KHS aren't represented at this forum.
- Please distribute a contact number for KHS.

4. Presentation by Tony Chadwick, Principal Planning Officer Planning & Regeneration Services, Gravesham Borough Council

The Forum received a presentation from both Kevin Burbidge and Tony Chadwick on why the land West of Wrotham Road, (adjacent Lanes Avenue) had been initially considered for development. It was initially put as a possible site in the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) by a developer, (the assessment of land potentially available for all uses including housing) for development. The site has been removed as a potential site by GBC with cross party support. Councillors believing that it shouldn't be developed. However, this position could be challenged and it is possible that a Planning Inspector would allocate for development. The site is green field but not in the Green Belt. GBC needs the views of local residents on this issue and the Forum was encouraged to make their feelings formally known (in writing) as part of the LDF consultation process currently taking place, if they opposed any development on this site, or not.

Q&A Session

Q: How do you get a copy of the LDF consultation document if you don't have a PC?

A: There are copies in the libraries in Gravesham.

Q: Why has the fact this land is in the LDF not been advertised better?

A: We can't advertise everything in the plan but the consultation process is ongoing. There will be a fresh round of consultation in the summer.

Q: If this land is developed into a housing estate, how will the schooling system cope?

A: We talk to local service providers and create an infrastructure plan. We talk to KCC Education and factor all issues in.

Q: Is this site of special scientific interest, any stag beetles?

A: No, not a site of special scientific interest but is significant green space for the area.

Q: How does the land at Westcourt Avenue fit in to the LDF?

A: 'Schools for the future' are going to redevelop St Georges School.

5. Neighbourhood Forum Grants

Cllr Leslie Christie announced the recommendations of funding from the second round of Neighbourhood Forum project funding.

- Northfleet Age Concern - £1100
- BTCV - £2600
- Woodshed Theatre Company - £2000

- Dial North West Kent - £1000
- Council for Voluntary Services Northwest Kent - £650
- BME Concern - £1543
- Gravesend Regatta Committee - £1227

Total available - £10,120

Groups can apply for Grants again in April 2010. We are encouraging new groups to apply.

Question time - general questions regarding GBC and KCC to Members and Officers present

Q: The old maternity unit in Gravesend has been bordered up for 10 years, what is going on?

A: The building is owned by PCT, they are trying to sell it.

Q: What is happening with the White Horse?

A: The White Horse will come before the GBC Planning Committee in April.

Q: What is happening with the Lord Street Car Park area?

A: The original developers have given the land back to GBC. It is proposed that it will be temporarily used as a car park

Q: When will HGV drivers be encouraged to use proper roads and not smaller country diversions?

A: This will be looked into.

Q: Why are the traffic signs and general traffic planning so backward in Gravesend?

A: KCC deals with traffic planning etc Gravesham deals with car parking. Please raise any issues with your Local Councillor.

GBC is looking into creating a 'gateway' at the Council where members of the public can talk to both GBC officers and KCC officers in one place.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9:08 pm