

## **Minutes of Semilong Community Forum meeting**

**April 8 2009**

**Present:** Zoë Martin, Steven Richards, Ruth Pott-Negrine, Stephen Welyczko, Andy Langton, Pam Thompson, Jack Thompson, Ann Timson, Gemma Craigie, Ben Sharland, Brian Crutchley, Rob Chadwick, Daphne Barritt, Cllr Tess Scott, Cllr Tony Clarke, Mike Kenny, John Rowlands.

**Apologies:** MP Brian Binley, Michelle Aveyard, Jonathan Evans-Southall, Jen Kenny, Alastair Melton, Castle Ward SCT.

### **Abbreviations Used:**

**SCF** - Semilong Community Forum

**NBC** - Northampton Borough Council

**NCC** - Northampton County Council

**AGYCC** - Alliston gardens Youth and Community Centre

**MUGA** - Multi Use Games Area

**WNDC** - West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

**CW-SCT** - Castle Ward Safer Communities Team

**PCSO** - Police Community Support Officer

**FOR** - Friends of the Racecourse

**NHW** - Neighbourhood Warden

**JAG** - Joint Action Group

**HiMO** - Houses in Multi Occupation

**NISG** - Northampton Irish Support Group

**CFC** - Climate Friendly Communities

**NISG** – Northampton Irish Support Group

**The meeting opened at 7:40pm and was chaired by Zoë Martin @ Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre.**

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed, except SW and AM were not present at the March meeting.

### **Actions from last meeting**

1. ZM has received an update from NCC regarding pot holes.
2. It was noted that no representatives from the CW-SCT were present
3. BC to forward invoices to Stephen.

**Action:** Brian to formally contact CW-SCT inviting them to our next meeting.

### **Andy Langton – Neighbourhood Warden**

Andy reported that there were currently 3 NW's covering the town centre, St. Crispin, Castle and West Hunsbury, AL also have to cover part of St. James.

Fixed penalties for littering and bin bags out early have now been agreed by the council. There will be a 2 tier system as late payers will pay twice as much. This will encourage people to pay the fines early.

19 untaxed cars were removed from the ward streets in the past month.

At a recent parking issues meeting it was identified that yellow lines needed painting. NCC has been invited to the next meeting.

The Probation service has tidied up 2 community gardens on Leicester street. One area has been converted into a vegetable growing plot and one has been converted into a meadow area. AL asked is there were any other areas that need clearing up that the probation service could do.

SR suggested the community garden at Alliston Gardens as the previous person had moved out of the area. BC suggested that the local allotments could do with some work and suggested contacting NBC allotments department. SR also asked if the

centre could be painted this year.

JT asked if they could do grass cutting. AL said that this should be done by the council but due to cutbacks this work would be done less. TC said that this had been agreed at local council level under the suggestion that wild flower meadow would be created by reducing the amount of grass cutting. TC added that there should be a contract between council tenants and to council regarding the level of services they would receive.

ZM asked what the earliest time that bin bags could be put out. Al said it was no earlier than 7pm the night before collection.

AT has noticed that some newly planted trees near the railway line had been vandalised.

SW Asked about the people who had been residing at the royal mail HQ. AL said that they can use the homeless shelter on Ash Street and remarked what a good standard of service is provided there.

ZM said that it was positive that the site had been sorted out.

SR said that there had been a consultation at the centre recently regarding a new homeless shelter. JR thought the design looked like a hotel.

TS remarked that the better quality of accommodation then the better it will be respected by the users. In addition to this other agencies are better able to engage with homeless people.

**Action: No**

### **Steven Richards - AGYCC**

Steven is putting an application together for a few colour print drums for spot colours and asked what colour ink we would like.

The 10 year lease for the centre has now come through which will enable the centre to apply for charity status.

£750 has been awarded from CASPAR to provide a veggie bag scheme in the area. This work will include recipes, cooking demonstrations and additional information.

### **Action:**

Brian to let SR know what spot colour we would like for our newsletters

### **Health**

Michelle is currently on long term sick but should be back in a few months.

SR said he will be representing the area on the 5<sup>th</sup> May at an area meeting.

### **Funding Opportunities**

ZM reported that Avon are giving away £1000/month to local groups and asked the forum to suggest ideas for how we could make use of the funding. Some suggested ideas included:

- Get to know your neighbour event
- Coffee Morning
- Printing the info pack and launch

### **Finance**

Stephen reported no movement in the funds but was still waiting for the invoices of £159 for the website. New balance is expected to be £274.21

## Urban

ZM has organised another litter count for the afternoon of 9th May. RC and BC will also attend; other members of the forum are also invited.

ZM had been in contact with NCC regarding pot holes they have said that they are trying to remedy these with temporary patches. This is a problem across the whole of the county.

The forum felt that these pot holes should be fitted with a more permanent patch. ZM suggested that when we do the litter count we could also record the location and size of pot holes in the area.

TC raised an issue that had been brought to his attention by Kate Wills regarding Maureen Cook who feeds the local feral cats and raises money in order to have them neutered. Maureen had been verbally assaulted by a local resident while she had been tending to the cats. It is understood that the local SCT are now involved.

TC had received complaints from local residents regarding the Somali community café of Barrack road and local planning officers had been involved as the venue did not have the correct planning consent for its current use. This is a delicate issue and TC is hopeful that a solution can be found as the local Somali community currently feel that they are being victimised.

SR said that the Somali community previously used to use the community centre but this had finished a number of months ago.

## HiMOs

The work that had been tendered for did not have any offers and TC asked if members of the forum would be willing to carry out the research necessary. A number of forum members felt uncomfortable doing this as it would likely involve knocking on residents' doors and conducting interviews. SW suggested that maybe a research student from the local university could do this work. ZM said she would contact the university.

RC had confirmed from Central Networks that sub station land is cleared bi annually. Though he asked if they could look review their cleaning frequency.

RC contacted Street Doctor regarding the replacement of the 'Semilong Only' sign on Barrack Road. There was no update.

RC noted that one of the two telephone boxes on the junction of Semilong Road and Adelaide Road has been removed.

RC circulated a report produced by NBC regarding glass collections in black bins and cancelling one wheelie bin collection a month to accommodate the collection of glass. RC had emailed the council asking if there were any plans to provide this service to residents of Semilong as we do not have wheelie bins. TC said he felt that the proposal was inadequate and had raised this at the councils meeting. Originally a pilot scheme will now only be rolled out to those with wheelie bin collections.

The large stationary bins at Alliston Gardens will remain for local glass recycling.

RC circulated a draft letter to members of the forum for feedback regarding responding to local planning application for housing that might fall into the category of HiMOs or over development of houses into flats. TC asked for a couple of additions :

- Addition pressure of residents parking

- Planning application to be resolved at planning committee and by planning officer.

RC circulated a document from NBC regarding New Neighbourhood Working which he felt lacked delivery dates and performance columns.

TC said that the council were abdicating their responsibility, as the document suggests that NCC and WNDC will implement most of the projects.

RC to invite the author to our next meeting so we can help them fill in the columns

Pam Thompson said that she had found a drug needle in her front gardens and as the grass had not been cut, wondered how many other needles may be found.

#### **Action:**

BC to invite forum members and representative of NBC to the litter count

ZM to contact University of Northampton to see if they have any willing volunteers to do the HiMO survey

RC to update the planning letter

RC to ask author of New Neighbourhood Working document to our next meeting so we can help in filling in the missing information

#### **Environment Green**

##### ***Climate Friendly Communities***

Letter sent to Castle school asking them to be involved with our poster competition. Hopefully have an update next month.

##### ***Play Builder / Sensory Garden – Millers Meadow***

No update

##### ***Grafton Street Memorial Garden***

No Update

JT asked about the CCTV camera on Semilong Road. There was some confusion as to how it worked and conflicting information about what it was able to see.

AL said that there were only a limited number of operators and about 600 camera around town for them to monitor.

#### **Action:**

BC to asked CW-SCT in invitation latter regarding the CCTV

#### **Communication**

GC said that a number of local people had attended the Community Writers weekend course and articles had been submitted for the Springboard letters page.

CG said that there would be another summer event this year and the planned date is the 12 – 4pm on 11<sup>th</sup> July. A meeting is taking place at the Annex, Spring Lane on 30<sup>th</sup> April at 4:30pm. The event is expected to be similar to last year's event. This year Northampton Sport will also be involved. The issue of food has not yet been decided. Ideas welcome.

#### **Easy Rider - Guided Rides With Instructo. Bikes and Equipment For Loan**

14<sup>th</sup> April, Victoria Park, 10am @ Outside Gym.

2<sup>nd</sup> May, Brampton Way, 10am @ Brampton Car Park.

30<sup>th</sup> May, Harlestone Firs, 10am @ Camrose Centre.  
Ring Jason Williams on 01604 629595 or 07957 353482 for more information.

SW – 12 week **Man Alive** course for men of all ages  
Starting Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 7 – 9pm at Spring Lane School - £1/week

**Action:**

No actions.

**Crime**

No representatives were present this month.

BC asked if there had been a Jag meeting recently. RC said there was one for the 4<sup>th</sup> May but believes it has been cancelled because of May Day.

PT said that there had been an aggressive charity collector in the flats claiming to be from the Red Cross. She asked him to leave the building. PT asked if information about cold callers could be circulated.

**Actions**

No Actions

**AOB**

ZM said it has been confirmed that a representative from NBC housing will be able to attend our meeting in June and asked for questions to be submitted so they could be forwarded to Housing before they attend.

RC suggested leafleting the local council houses for questions.

TC said that the development of the castle station is back on and it is important that we ensure that local people are consulted.

**Actions**

BC to leaflet local council houses regarding housing attending our June meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting**

13<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Meeting closed at 21.10