

Newtown Community Association Open Forum Meeting Monday 14th July 2014 at 7.30 pm, Belmont Hut

Minutes

- Present:** Su Aves (Secretary), Joan Bond, Simon Bowkett (ECVS), Richard Branston, (Councillor) Derek Burnside (Treasurer), Jacky Cox, James Leigh (Hut maintenance), Rory McNeile (Chair), Elena Milego, Sally Palmer, Steve Palmer, Michael Parrott (Vice Chair & Publicity) , Roger Spackman (Councillor), Saxon Spence, Richard Westlake (Councillor).
- Apologies:** George Dumble, Jackie Holdstock (Hut Bookings Manager), Peter Montgomery (Webmaster).

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Action by:</u>
1	Welcome	
2	Review of minutes of the previous Forum meeting. The minutes of the 28 th April 14 were approved and signed by the chair.	
3	<p>Newtown Ward Councillors' Update</p> <p>The plan for the Kingfisher development adjacent to the Printworks to become student accommodation progresses, although a clear management plan is yet to be put in place to ensure good community relations. A 24 hour warden on site has worked well in the Printworks, although that has yet to be agreed by the new works' developers.</p> <p>A 'swift tower' is being erected on the Paris Street roundabout. It will have a more modern look than the original plans suggested.</p> <p>Heavitree Road turning right into Spicer Road will have a dedicated right-hand lane. Following some collisions, the Polsloe Road/Heavitree Road/Barack Rd junction yellow box junction will be altered to enable better flow, especially for vehicles turning right from Heavitree Rd into Barack Rd.</p> <p>The bollards outside Newton Primary School may be amended to allow better vehicular access.</p> <p>The planting on the Denmark Rd/Barnfield Hill junction is a great improvement, although the markings don't give clear indication of right of way. Richard Westlake explained that it was intended to a 'community'-style junction with plenty of scope for informal movement, although the Maynard School traffic is making it less workable than originally envisaged and damage has been inflicted on some of the grass areas. The situation is being explored; the theory that the lack of markings actually slows traffic down and thus increases safety is under review.</p>	
4	<p>The Vision</p> <p>Update on Funds raising The chair reiterated that have ended our contract with Granted fundraisers, although they continue to shepherd through on remaining remunerated time two bids whose outcomes are awaited: Devon Waste Management for approx £50k, and the Bernard Sunley fund for approx £30k. The Lottery</p>	

'Reaching Communities' fund bid stalled at an early stage, when the allocated project officer was dismissive of the original submission, questioning the lack of quality evidence that the Vision would genuinely benefit and enrich the community, especially its more disadvantaged members. Saxon Spence queried the wisdom of appointing Granted.

Review of questionnaire feedback Questionnaires to current and former user groups have been completed and analysed. Recurring feedback has included complaints about the current hut's size, temperature, disabled access and quality of kitchen and other facilities. Some potential future user groups of enhanced facilities have also been identified.

Over 100 questionnaires were completed at the Respect Festival, and the analysis of those is ongoing. Poor disabled access, overbooking and lack of publicity are common reasons for non-usage. More youth activities and the exemplary nature of its eco-credentials are popular expectations of the new hut. Almost all respondees were over 35 years old, with over 70% living within half a mile of the park.

The way ahead The discussion ranged widely, and numerous avenues were explored. Notable insights included:

A better hut could become the heart of greater community engagement in delivering local services in light of the current public sector cuts.

Simon Bowkett described the changing face of the charity sector in the current economic climate; more than 50% of charity revenue now comes from commercial activity. There will not be more money coming if a Labour government gets in next year, although the distribution of existing funds may be more equitable. The Social Value Acts gives us the right to challenge the spending of local councils. Lots of local initiatives will be competing for the same pots of money from funds such as the Reaching Communities Lottery Fund. Many groups will be seeking to make their buildings open to greater community access.

The NHS is focussing increasingly on prevention strategies that would offset the need for costly acute care. Education, active lifestyles and nutritional information are all hot-button issues at the moment. Any initiatives that reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime will also be beneficial, and work with Active Devon and other similar bodies will be beneficial.

The parks and open spaces strategy will need to be cohesive across a wide variety of parks. Food security and reducing food poverty is leading to increased interest in growing food in urban settings through initiatives such as urban orchards. Kevin Frediani is the lead on this at Bicton College, and the hut's location may make that a valuable line to pursue.

We were reminded that the Lottery is effectively an arm of government funding government policy. Businesses can also receive lottery funding if a project's benefits are evident. 'Self-sustaining civil societies' are the goal at the moment. Grant money will not emerge for projects that are untested. 'Social investment' is increasingly common: social investors work with commissioners and local community groups, and if the scheme is successful the investor makes a return on their money through payments by results.

Strategic partnerships with local organisations using the facility as a base for community enhancement will be crucial. Local business expertise is freely available for suitable local community initiatives such as The Vision. The core question will be what tangible, monetary difference is this going to make to the local community? Simple outcomes – number of meetings held, etc., - are not sufficient – we need to give evidence of measurable outcomes, the social return on investment – what meaningful return do we give in social terms?

	<p>This ward has a serious level of social deprivation. Life expectancy in Newtown/Polsloe is the lowest in the city, Sidwell Street having a 17-year lower life expectancy than Topsham. (Clarification on the basis of those statistics is being sought). GPs increasingly report that patients are seeking medical solutions for social problems, and an enhanced 'Healthy Living' community hub could mesh well with current societal and health concerns and would benefit from the co-location of hut and park. Conversations with local deliverers such as medical practitioners and West Bank healthy living centre at Exminster, will be crucial; Mary Nisbitt and Keri Ross will be valuable contacts. Sexual health and obesity awareness, increased exercise programmes, smoking prevention, 'memory cafes' and 'eco-therapies' (some of these potentially doctor-prescribed) could be based in the new building.</p> <p>Jacky Cox reminded us that going in this direction will take us a long way from the original NCA vision of the new hut as an open and quality resource for the local community to enjoy, rather than a delivery point for social policy. She also questioned whether a small team of already busy volunteers really has the capacity to drive through a project of this scale. Are we in danger of pursuing a new building at any costs? Is this what this was ever about?</p>	
5	<p>Upcoming events:</p> <p>Dog Walkers Café/Health Café Sunday 20th July, 2-5pm WW1 Commemoration. Sunday 3rd August, 2 – 5pm. Community Choir, live music. National Play Day on Weds 7th August 12 – 3pm. Free children's event. Carnival Event: Unexpected Exeter. 31st August carnival parade. Starting in the park. Food festival. Sunday 14th September, 12-4pm Great West Run: Sunday 19th October. The hut and park are this year's 'race HQ'. Halloween Café, Saturday 25th October, 5pm Craft Fair. Sunday 30th November, 11 – 4pm. Winter Warmer, Sunday 14th December, 6pm.</p>	
6	<p>Hut Issues The ramp to the Gordon Rd end fire door has recently had a rail fitted, and grab-handles in the toilets and by the external door are now in place. The toilet doors have new handles. The maintenance of the problematic floor in the piano room is ongoing. Our thanks to James Leigh for all his work.</p>	
7	<p>Treasurer's Report The treasurer reported that our current bank statement stands at £11023.62. The summary of the accounts for the first half of 2014 appear below and will be posted on the website.</p>	
8	<p>AOB We noted that the NCA supported the recent Magic Carpet event with a gift of £62.</p>	
9	<p>Date of next meeting Our next 'Open Forum' will also be the AGM, taking place on Saturday 25th October at 10.30am.</p>	

NCA Interim accounts to June 30th 2014

1. Receipts

(2013)

A: General funds

Hut hire income	£3902.5	£3902
Café Income	£148.57	£154.66
Choir Income	£1407.24	£1121
OAP Cafes & Qi Gong subs	£658.47	£191.40
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£6116.78</u>	

B: Designated Funds

Vision

Exeter City Council	£6000	
Exeter City Council	£3600	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£9600</u>	

Total receipts £15716.78

2. Payments

A: General funds

Non-domestic rates	£65.70	£32
Cleaner	£1130.52	£1168.87
Community Choir	£1560	£1455
Rubbish collection	£177.50	£109.90
Supplies	£481.33	£614.80

Power	£720	£690.42
Maintenance	£305.50	£63.40
Insurance	£155.77	£157.31
Publicity	£169.47	£65
Events	£98.34	£29.65
Water	£182.66	£165.50
Fire protection	£40.04	£0
OAP Cafes/Qi Gong	£964.75	£457.48
Hut booking reimb	£15	£42
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£6066.58</u>	

B: Designated funds

Granted	£3600
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£3600</u>

Total payments **£9666.52**

General Fund receipts over payments: 50.02

Designated Funds receipts over payments: £6000

(Note: This represents reimbursement for an invoice in 2013 previously paid to Granted from our General Fund)

Note:

Qi Gong & Social Cafes have to date this year lost	£306.28
Community choir to date this year has lost	£152.76

Closing Bank Balance (as of 6th June 2014, £11,023.62)

Derek Burnside, Treasurer. 3rd July 2014
