

Newtown Community Association Open Forum Meeting
Saturday 23rd May 2015 at 10.30 am
Minutes

Present: Su Aves (Secretary,) Richard Branston (councillor), Derek Burnside (treasurer), Abigail Grace (Devon Refugee Support Group), Katarina Grantham (University student warden), James Leigh (Hut maintenance), Debbie McNeile, Rory McNeile (Chair), Jackie Holdstock (Hut Bookings Manager), Saxon Spence, Jacky Cox, Peter Montgomery (webmaster), Nic Unsworth (PCSO for Newtown & St Leonards), Johanna Korndorfer.

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Action by:</u>
1	Apologies: Michael Parrott, Richard Westlake, Roger Spackman, Gay Smith, Sally & Steve Palmer and Liam Garrett.	
2	Review of minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes of the 21 st Feb 2015 Open Forum were approved and signed by the chair.	
3	Treasurer's report. Derek presented the accounts to date, which are attached with the minutes.	
4	The Vision Update A £20k bid to the Bernard Sunley fund was successful. A further £50k bid is in progress, to be submitted by the end of the month to Garfield Weston Foundation. An application to Jewson was unsuccessful. Exeter University expertise is helping to shape a resubmission to the Big Lottery fund. Planning permission for the original design expires at the end of next month. We will not pursue the costly process of resubmission at this stage, until the funding is in place, although Rory will discuss that with Ross Hussey. We continue to pursue the original vision, but if funding fails we will pursue a less expensive 'plan B'.	RM
5	Newtown Ward Councillor's Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Richard reported that concern had been expressed at the loss of four trees outside the Pyramids Swimming Pool. He is following it up. • <input type="checkbox"/> A contentious planning application has been made for Toronto Road, to remove garages and erect 3-story flats, which would mean the loss of a large lime tree and amenity space including an area used for children's play. • <input type="checkbox"/> Lethbridge Cottages have recently had their kitchens refurbished; a ceremony was held. • <input type="checkbox"/> The pathway at the sensory garden was to be re-laid – Richard will chase. • <input type="checkbox"/> The Samaritans have had a request for further signage refused by the Council on the grounds of cost. The NCA committee will consider whether we wish to lobby on their behalf. • <input type="checkbox"/> The reduction of grass and verge-cutting due to cuts is causing concern. • <input type="checkbox"/> Su has again managed to get us entered in the Express & Echo Communities award. The 28th May edition is the last paper with tokens, which have to be in by the 31st May. Tokens can be dropped off to Su. As the close date nears the value of the tokens increases. • <input type="checkbox"/> Premier Inn Staff Community Volunteering. We discussed whether there would be opportunities for work in the park or the hut; options could be weeding alongside the park paths, or litter picking, or leaf clearance in the autumn, or drain clearing. Any further suggestions for work their one-off team could complete, please contact Su, who will also liaise with the council. 	RB RM All SA
6	Hut Issues	

	<p>Jackie won't be taking bookings between June 17th & July 5th.</p> <p>James has repaired some of the external boards, and the internal and external lighting has been renovated.</p> <p>Disability Access. A wheelchair user attending the Arts Project has struggled to get over the door sill at the top of the ramp. Su will approach Terry Jackson at the council's Estates Department. Richard offered to contribute £300 to the cost of a ramp from his ward grant.</p>	SA
7	<p>University Wardens' Report Katie Grantham reported that efforts are being made to inform current first years about good practice once they move out of halls and into local housing in the autumn. 'Students on the Move' arranges extra bin collections for when they move out of their houses at the end of the summer term. Local residents will be made aware of why the extra collections are happening. An app has been created to help students stay on track with bin collections.</p> <p>The wardens collect student glass, and also spare usable food, which goes to the Food Bank.</p>	
8	<p>PCSO's report Nic reported that a drug operation around the park and Blackboy Rd toilets had happened in April; an arrest had been made.</p> <p>Planning for the Respect Festival is ongoing.</p> <p>Graffiti has been an issue around the city, but CCTV images have not helped.</p> <p>Special Constables have been stationed on Clifton Hill, giving tickets to cyclists ignoring the one-way system. Wider concerns about cyclists' procedure and safety were expressed. Nic says to highlight black spots to him.</p> <p>Nic will have to cover St Leonards and Newtown. Other potential departures, including a PCSO and Newtown's designated PC, will not be replaced.</p> <p>Police Cadets are available to help at community projects.</p>	
9	<p>Refugee Support Devon. Abigail Grace reported that RSD has been established for 13 years, and was started by a group of volunteers. 150 – 200 refugees and asylum seekers from 28 nationalities are seen in the course of a year, with a variety of issues. Many of them are from Afghanistan, a result of Exeter's previous role as a dispersal centre, a status which might be renewed as current centres approach capacity. 2 days a week are drop-in. English and IT classes and an allotment are run. 3 part-time staff and 60 volunteers run the project. Volunteers help with one-off events, fund raisers, the allotment, home tuition, etc. RSD works hard to correct misconceptions (often media-driven) about the status of asylum seekers and refugees, for example refuting the terms 'bogus' asylum seeker, and distinguishing between asylum seekers and 'economic migrants'. Those granted refugee status are accorded the rights of the host country. Those refused it are extremely needy, and RSD seeks to support them as well. Increasingly Syria, Somalia and Eritrea are nations from which significant numbers of refugees emerge.</p> <p>The 'City of Sanctuary' Initiative seeks to make asylum seekers and refugees welcome. Some cities choose to focus on health care provision, some run strongly community-based befriending/orientation projects, some use theatre-based projects to occupy, train and support Rs & ASs. The university has taken a lead on this, and seeks to be a 'University of Sanctuary', and RSD is working to see Exeter accorded this status. Refugee Week runs in mid June, and Abigail left leaflets. DSG will have a stall at the Respect Festival. Pledges from organisations can be filled out, as part of seeking CoS status. The committee will consider whether NCA should sign a pledge.</p>	RM
10	<p>Exeter Community Forum has recently been formed to enable Exeter community groups to liaise and present a united front and voice to the council. In particular the group will be making proposals on how the Community Infrastructure Levy's neighbourhoods portion will be distributed across Exeter's communities. The council is seeing ECF as a forum through which community groups could contribute to greater involvement in delivery of local services. Rory read out the ECF's terms of reference, which are attached with these minutes. ECF will be appointing a facilitator to assist in the group's tasks.</p> <p>Rory and Derek have both been co-opted to the ECF steering group.</p> <p>Once the new ward and county boundaries have been agreed we will need to re-assess out geographical identity as an association.</p>	
11	<p>Event Reports Magic Carpet art exhibition was well-attended and very impressive.</p> <p>Amnestea Cafe successfully sought to raise funds and support for Amnesty International and was run by 'Flute Cake'.</p> <p>Portland St Planter Cafe. 18 planters have been attached in Portland Street as a result of the Cafe, and some Portland St residents met one-another for the first</p>	

	time. Newtown Community School 's gardening club also participated in wild flower seed planting. Jo White is to be commended for her energy and initiative.	
12	<p>Future events:</p> <p>Respect Festival: June 6th – 7th. In addition to some of our regular users contributing displays we will represent some of the year's past events, such as the WW1 bunting, the Portland St planting, etc.</p> <p>June 14th – 2-5 pm Healthy living - cycle group and Joe Salmon, yoga, Qigong sitting down, etc. Rory is running it.</p> <p>July 19th – 2-5pm Table Top Swap Cafe Led by Sally Palmer. Students could be involved, Katy will liaise with Sally. August 16th – 2-5pm Community Cafe Possibly run with Polsloe CA.</p> <p>September 13th Food festival. Sunday 13th September, 12-4pm , Title and music tbc. Su will contact the stall holders and ask if they might also have world music contributors.</p> <p>Halloween Café, Saturday 31st October, 5pm- 8pm</p> <p>Craft Fair. Sunday 29th November, 11 – 4pm.</p> <p>Winter Warmer, Sunday 13th December, 6pm-8pm.</p>	
13	<p>AOB The Big Rhino Project We agreed to bid for one of 15 baby Rhinos distributed to community groups, to be displayed in summer 2016, to encourage community cohesion, and to express our support for Rhino preservation. 3rd July is the deadline for applications. We will have a Rhino cafe, in association with the scrap store, the community arts project, and Magic Carpet. Exact detail of how the design will be finalised and how the project will be run is tbc by the Rhino sub-committee ; Su is leading the charge. They'll also consider what happens with it afterwards – it would be sad if the Rhino were to turn into a white elephant.</p> <p>The proposal that, if our bid for a free Rhino is unsuccessful we buy one (£250), was carried.</p> <p>St Sidwells Community Cafe is running a scheme to ensure children who receive free school meals are catered for during the school holidays.</p> <p>Newtown Primary School is looking for a new community governors. More details from Saxon or from Su.</p>	SA
14	Date of next meeting Our next 'Open Forum' is on Saturday 22nd August, 10.30am- 12.30am.	