

# MINUTES OF THE SYDENHAM ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 12 September 2013 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Best and Marion Nisbet

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Liam Curran

## 19. 7.00 Introduction and welcome

**Cllr Chris Best** Welcomed everyone to the Sydenham Assembly and started with thanking Valerie for the service and delivery of the Family Mosaic project.

Valerie added that 4 years ago she was standing in front of a similar Assembly asking for £10,000 towards the project and carried on to raise more funds which totalled £50,000.

## 20. 7.15 Presentation on planning issues

### The Greyhound

Joost Van Well, LBL Area Manager, told the assembly that the planning enforcement action was not taken against The Greyhound contractors for the demolition of the pub. Subsequently the contractors were taken to court, lost and were fined. Permission to build the pub had lapsed which meant that planning permission to rebuild the pub with 2 flats upstairs had to be resubmitted.

There is a deed of variation in process between lawyers and needs to be signed by all parties which have an interest in the land. building works cannot take place until this is done.

### Enforcement issues

Joost said that the department are receiving a lot of pressure as the staff are stretched especially regarding enforcement and the resources in terms of visiting sites. There are a lot of outstanding queries in Sydenham about a range of issues and priorities need to be set in regards to enforcement and what can be reasonably tackled and what cannot be as there are approximately 800 outstanding enquiries.

The department has decided to change the System to receive updates regarding changes in people streets. Instead of sending out newsletters which is timely and costly they will be setting up a system whereby you register to receive updates to see if something is happening in your street. This will include site notices on the streets, and fundamental changes into the way the department consult. This has been introduced based on a pilot in Croydon.

### Residents Feedback:

- Residents are not optimistic that once the deed of variation is signed by all parties that work will continue and feel that there will continue to be a mishandling of the project by LBL Planning department. There had been

attempts by residents to show LBL Planning department that the developer of The Greyhound was not acting lawfully and was overlooked for many months.

- There is a concern from the residents that sites are not regularly visited by LBL officers and are therefore unable to see what the developers are doing first hand, as in the case of The Greyhound who have acted unlawfully and demolished a building that should not have been, and build what they did not have permission to build.
- The residents are concerned that LBL had knowledge that the developers had previously tried to cut corners with LBL projects so shouldn't have used them again in this instance.
- A resident explained that there are a lot of issues surrounding The Greyhound and the assembly need to think of how they can resolve the situation and what they would like to see on the site. E.g. A public square, restaurant, outside space for residents to use rather than what is currently present.

Cllr Chris Best added a report back will be given on the update of The Greyhound as the issue is still with legal, and there is an expectation from the community that the Planning department will enforce action against the developers to build and complete agreements. Cllr Chris Best went on to add the enforcement issues around satellite dishes, shop fronts, and temporary signs should be actioned.

In response Joost said that with enforcement there is procedure that needs to be taken and the question, 'what harm has been caused by the development?' needs to be asked. The powers of enforcement are limited and take a negotiation approach with shop owners to shop fronts.

### **Consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement**

#### **Residents Feedback:**

- Residents are unhappy with the signage as some notices are a few years old and need to be regularly updated.
- Good quality monitoring for access to the website is needed as there is a concern that moving the System for updates in their area from Paper to Electronic will be excluding marginal communities by going purely web based. Enforcement needed to find a way that these marginalized communities will have a way of accessing services.
- The Windmill pub in Kirkdale Road is under threat as Sainsbury's have applied and been granted a license. The notices for planning have not been displayed and the residents have contacted Sainsbury's and the planning department about this. Nothing has been done for 6 weeks.

Joost added that there are many other ways for residents to access services for example Sydenham Forum and he will be taking the issue regarding notices back to the office.

## 21. 7.05 Presentation on Sydenham Road improvements

Tom Henry from Highways with Jill and Steve from Riney's were present to pick up on any issues from Sydenham Road and to present the map to outline the work that will be carried out further down the road. See Pamphlet Drawing and letter to residents Documents

Tom Henry, Engineering manager LBL, stated that there has been approval for extension works with Riney's which will take place over the next 3-4 months. Skanska will be working with UK power networks connections and disconnections in regards to lamp columns and once the connections are made the old lamp columns will be removed.

17 trees are to be planted in November. There are proposals for planting on the roundabout which is due to be completed by the end of September.

Skanska's work is almost complete except for the works on Station Approach. The last element of Station Approach wasn't completed because of an issue with the toilets, wall and the small planting station that wasn't transferred over to the council. Tom has been chasing this and is hoping for progress to book in with Network Rail Track possessions to remove these and finalise the work including ordering the new toilet and finishing the demolition and paving.

There will also be legible London signs installed by Transport for London's contractors.

Steve from JB Riney thanked the residents, businesses, stakeholders, and Lewisham Council for the cooperation and the support for the works to be completed on time. They also expressed that it was a pleasure to work in Sydenham and are looking forward to starting the extension works.

Steve commented on the black tarmac and said that this was temporary until the trees were planted, and was the same case for the black tarmac around Sydenham which is for the connections to be made for the lamp columns.

Urban Design London will be doing an inspection on the 4<sup>th</sup> October and walking around Sydenham high street to see how the industry perceives the scheme. Urban Design have expressed a roaring success and are looking to extend the Street scaping in Sydenham to other areas in London.

Steve added there is a letter going out showing the proposal map of the extension works. Riney will be doing the pavement works until the end of January.

Steve asked that any comments feedback and suggestions people have should be addressed to himself to action immediately.

### **Residents Feedback:**

- The steps outside the building are hard to see in the dark.
- More signage is needed.

- Chewing gum marks are spoiling the new paving. There should be a look into finding a jet washer to share between wards to be used on the chewing gum.
- The traffic around Sydenham has increased vastly, and may be issues around the traffic lights.
- There should be a yellow box junction with cameras on the roundabout to alleviate the traffic flow so cars are not blocking one another.
- The residents thanked Tom Henry and Riney's on the scheme. They expressed that in order for the scheme to be a success the traffic and signals should be sorted out in order to see the real benefits.
- It is hoped from the residents that despite the extension works, they be extended further.
- The pot holes around Sydenham are disrupting to the residents and needs to be addressed immediately as has been an issue for 6 years.

Cllr Chris Best thanked Tom and Riney's for attending the meeting and will give an update in the meeting in November on how far the works have got.

## **22. 7.35 Sydenham School - improvements on site**

Carolyn Unsted, Sydenham School Head teacher, expressed that the school is a significant part of the community and has been educating the young women of the borough since 1917.

Sydenham School is the last of the schools in Lewisham to be rebuilt and has been able to learn lessons from other developments. They have received great community support with the overall project costing £22 million.

The site will include a horticulture section with chickens and other animals. There will be outdoor education including learning, performances, and play areas with an overall increase of outdoor space for the students to utilise. There will be a sports hall, dance and drama studio and a sixth form area.

Each student will have a handheld device or tablet including the sixth form. Over 300 students have been recruited into year 12. There will be a hall for hire within the school for community to use. There will also be separate SEN centre with a primary classroom to increase the confidence of the students going onto secondary school with the aim of making the transition much smoother.

### **Residents Feedback:**

- Residents feel there is a need to include the residents of Sydenham with the School, e.g. Community Groups, Youth Groups.

## **23. 7.50 SEE3 Town Team Action Groups**

Cllr Chris Best talked through the map handout including how technology and community engagement can develop to find out hidden secrets about Sydenham with the aim of joining the three areas together. She expressed the importance of events in the borough in bringing the community together.

Cllr Chris Best also encouraged residents to attend the SEE3 Join In meetings and give their thoughts and feedback. They are in there 2<sup>nd</sup> phase as funding is until March 2013.

**24. 8.00 Feedback from last Sydenham Assembly on 4 June**

None

**25. 8.05 Sydenham Assembly Fund £12,500 - table discussion on what to fund from the top priorities**

Joan Roach from Spice- talked about Time Credits. The basic principle of Time credits is 1 time credit is earned for 1 hour of time given to an organisation. Each organisation/ assembly/ coordinating group can act as a banker in order to increase community involvement. Joan added that she has made some meetings to work with Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum to pilot time credits. There is a brochure available to show the places where the time credits can be spent

Jane from Rushey Green Time Bank added that they now have 5 hubs and Sydenham Library is included in this. Jane encouraged the residents to come and spend their time and share skills and will be having a 'bring and fix' for the community to share skills at Sydenham Library at the end of October.

Cllr Chris Best updated that there will be a community café in Mayor Park and to look to how the residents can develop Wells Park.

**26. 8.30 Reaching agreement on what to fund**

Cllr Chris Best explained that following the new commissioned approach, the coordinating group would develop the initiatives from the top priorities highlighted in the previous assembly and these will be brought to the next meeting. The coordinating group will particularly look at specific projects and organisations that can tie in with the funding priorities.

**27. 8.40 Join the Sydenham Assembly Coordinating Group**

Maya Onyett expressed the need for more people, including young people to join the coordinating group. These meetings occur quarterly, usually 3- 4 weeks before an assembly.

**28. 8.45 Information items and open questions and answers**

- **Online Consultation**

Cllr Chris Best explained that there is online consultation about discretionary rate relief for charities and some social enterprise organisations. Those interested should go online. Consultations include sporting priorities and sport for arts organisations.

- **Sydenham Arts Festival**

Sydenham Arts festival will be looking at an intergenerational community youth event through opera. This will mark the centenary of WW1. All those interested should email [director@sydenhamartsfestival.co.uk](mailto:director@sydenhamartsfestival.co.uk) The Sydenham Arts Festival will be the 5<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

Comedy event at Zanzi Bar from 16<sup>th</sup> October including 12 performances- residents have been invited to come along and join the experience and support the venue and artists

- **The Windmill pub**

Mary put in a plea for the Windmill pub as it is the only pub in the area with full disabled access, it is a family hub which allows children in the daytime and is an overall great venue and space for functions.

- **'Connected'**

Sasha Leacock, Community Arts Manager at Forest Hill School, has a special performing arts status and works with local schools and community groups to help with activities and events. On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013 there will be a family learning day 'Connected' to promote the power of learning, to highlight and celebrate the value of family learning and showcase the benefits of children, parents, and grandparents sharing skills and knowledge. This will include fun educational workshops, talks and activities and will include information, advice and signposting from partner agencies in the borough.

The event is free and all information will be on the schools website. If any residents would like to volunteer they should contact Sasha directly or via [cpa@forethillschool.co.uk](mailto:cpa@forethillschool.co.uk)

- **Sydenham Library**

Is run by Eco Computer Systems who are all volunteers except for the manager. The organisation are looking for volunteers to organise books and help with children's activities. There will be a concert to celebrate Black History Month in October with Jazz, Blues and Soul Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October.

**29. 8.55 Dates for the next Assembly meetings**

**Cllr Chris Best thanked all for coming. The next meeting will be held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November 11am at Sydenham Catholic Club, Watlington Grove off Sydenham Road.**

**30. 9.00 Close**