

# **MINUTES OF THE GROVE PARK ASSEMBLY**

**Wednesday, 2 July 2014 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Suzannah Clarke, Colin Elliott and Hilary Moore

ALSO PRESENT:

Apologies for absence were received from

## **5. Welcome from Baring School**

Diane Brewer Head Teacher of Baring School opened the assembly meeting and introduced the School Singing and Story Club who performed several songs for the attendees.

## **6. Welcome and introducing the new Grove Park Councillors**

Cllr Suzannah Clarke Chair of the Grove Park Assembly thanked the school for hosting the assembly and thanked the children for their excellent performance. She then introduced the new Grove Park Councillors, Cllr Hilary Moore and Cllr Colin Elliot.

Cllr Clarke also thanked former Councillor Christine Alison for all her hard work in Grove Park ward.

Youth Ambassador – Cllr Clarke told the assembly that this is a new initiative and that we are seeking a young person aged 14-17 years to represent Grove Park and provide a forum for its young people. No previous experience is required and even if the person is shy we can help them. The only condition is that the person must reside in Grove Park ward.

## **7. Grove Park Station Access for All - Steven Taylor**

David Hignett, Chris Lloyd and Victoria Constable from Network Rail were at the assembly and to talk about the proposed changes to the station and the installation of the lifts. The assembly attendees were shown a presentation relating to the plans and a copy of the presentation is available upon request.

Q What is the capacity of the lifts?

A Sizes vary, but generally 16 persons

Q What is the core time of the lifts getting from the ground to platform level as this can be relevant for interconnecting trains?

A I am not sure but obviously this is also dependent on the mobility of person

Q Are the platforms being raised?

A No, platform heights are excluded from works

Q Do you have any start dates?

A We would like to start as soon as possible, the works will take about a year

Q The stairs look much steeper than the current ramps, how many levels will there be between each flight of stairs as I have problems with my joints?

A This is limited by design, but effectively it is two flights with a rest area in between

Q Will the steps be wide enough for a whole foot to step on?

A Yes, they will meet all building standards. This is why we need the lift as the ramps can be quite steep and some people will need to use the lift. With this scheme you have the option of steps or the lift

Q Will the steps be slippery when wet?

A No the bridge at Forest Hill is a good example, it is a non slip surface

Q How often will the lifts be cleaned and will there be CCTV coverage?

A The area will have 100% CCTV coverage, so new cameras will be added. The cleaning will be down to South Eastern

Q When the lifts are unavailable will staff be there to assist?

A South Eastern must have a policy regarding this, so if unavailable there will be procedures in place

Q (Cllr Clarke) Can you clarify that the nearest accessible station is Orpington?

A We did have people indicate that they drive to Orpington, but there is still Bromley North

Cllr Clarke- But you still need to access Grove Park to use Bromley North as it does not have a straight line through. What is the nearest accessible station to get into London?

A Probably Orpington, this is also why Grove Park needs a lift so as to compliment Bromley North

Q What is the running time of the lift from top to bottom?

A We do not have that information with us

Q What disruption will there be to the train service?

A There will be a normal service, no disruption

Q My understanding is that when there is a lift you need an Evacuation Chair, but the rules are that it needs 2 people to operate it, can you assure us that this can happen?

A This is a South Eastern issue, but they have to comply with the regulations, but we can check this for you

Q Thank you for doing the works, but what about the residents quality of life i.e. the noise levels during the works?

A We try to do as much work as we can whilst trains are running, however, sometimes we cannot do this due to us having to keep certain safety distances from the track. Then we have to look at other options and we will liaise with the Council and abide by noise limits with agreed restrictions in place

Q When is the planning meeting if we want to arise objections?

A The committee meeting is 17 July at the Civic Suite at 7.30pm

Q Grove Park does not need a modern type station, I am all for a lift, but the station does have character and this should be retained. Do you take on board the character of a station when you make these plans?

A When stations are listed or in a heritage area then we have too, but we cannot design every structure individually so we have to have a level of uniformity to keep costs down

Cllr Clarke – I think that this is a good point, people are not against the development, they just want to see a good development in keeping with the character of the station.

Q I live 5 minutes from the station and I have not heard of these plans. I have lots of concerns, firstly the plans are not in keeping with the original character and design. This is a 1900s attractive station and you are going to bury much of this. The removal of the ramps is unbelievable as they provide a speedy, convenient and easy access to the platforms and have done so safely for years and years. I have used them for over 70 years myself and I still have no problem using them. If you have to remove them here then surely you would have to do this at London Bridge and Waterloo as they are steeper. Lift options are a good idea, but they should be married into the original style of the station with the ramps remaining in place?

A We have discussed this and we cant keep the ramps as they don't conform to DFT standards

Cllr Clarke – How would you get off the station if it is late at night and the lifts are not working, some people would be able to use the ramps, but not the stairs. Is there a way to keep the ramps in addition to the new lifts. People feel that there are other options if there is the will to explore them.

Q Will the stairs be wide enough to go against the surge of passengers and will there be a centre rail?

A The width is dictated by the separation of the tracks, the stairs will be the same width as the current ramp, there will not be a centre handrail

Q Has there been any thought to the way that this is going to be lit and the affect on houses nearby and how noisy are the lifts going to be?

A We have offered screening on either side, this is privacy glass and fixed movers

Q So does the current station not confide with existing building regulations and is it true that in retrospect it does not have to apply if you are not disturbing it?

A Yes this is the case, but we have been asked by the department to bring it up to a better level. This will enable people with access problems to use the station.

Cllr Clarke – We need to clarify that we all want to see access for all at Grove Park Station, it is this design which is the issue. I would like to know accident rates on ramps as opposed to stairs and I would also like to know what is happening with the old historic iron bridge.

Cllr Clarke then thanked Network Rail for coming along and suggested that people to take their contact details and ask questions. She then reminded the assembly that on 17 July at 7.30pm there is the Planning Committee meeting.

## **8. Grove Park Housing Office L&Q - Karen Westbrook**

Karen Westbrook from L&Q told the assembly that the L&Q office had been located on Baring Road since 2007 and that on 13<sup>th</sup> May this year L&Q relocated as the building was needed by Community Education Lewisham (CEL). The office is now at Forest Hill but L&Q remain very committed to Grove Park with lots of services still on site and from next Monday 7 July there will be surgeries at the WG Grace Centre 3 times a week and then from September there will be a daily surgery at the CEL centre, this will be accessible to all residents and there will be 2 officers there. The only service that will not be provided is rental payments

Q I am a L&Q tenant and I knew nothing about this?

A Letters were sent out on 22 January and at the end of March, I can only apologise if you did not receive one

Q Why Forest Hill, it is a long way for us?

A We have residents in other areas and we own this building, there is nothing else available in Central Lewisham

## **9. NHS Lewisham Health Checks - Jo Edun**

The NHS Health Check programme is a national programme. The purpose of the programme is to identify people at high risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attacks, stroke and diabetes and to offer support and advice to reduce their risk. Everyone between the ages of 40-74 years (who don't already have cardiovascular disease) will be invited for a health check every 5 years.

Health checks are offered in Lewisham by GP surgeries, a number of community pharmacies across Lewisham and by the community outreach team, who regularly have a Health Check trailer at Lewisham shopping centre.

The Health Check takes about 20-30 minutes. A number of clinical measurements are taken such as cholesterol testing, blood pressure, weight and a number of questions are asked about family history and lifestyle. With this information each person is then given their personal risk score of developing CVD over the next 10 years. Those people are increased risk of

developing cardiovascular disease are given support and advice can be referred onto a number of programmes in Lewisham. These include Shape Up, for people who want help to lose weight or physical activity sessions such as aqua fit or zumba.

**10. Community Education Lewisham - Lisa Potter and Selina Elridge**

Lisa Potter from CEL told the assembly that CEL is moving from the site next to Coopers Lane School as there is pressure on primary school places. CEL is moving to the Baring Road site which is much larger than the current site. This means that there will be a new Textile Centre and the building will open on 15 September. There will be teaching rooms, a community café and lots of courses available. Details of courses can be found at the CEL website

Cllr Clarke – Can you give us an example of your courses and are they fee paying?

A We run a variety of courses at our 3 centres within the borough, these include English, Maths, ICT Courses, languages, family learning, arts and craft courses, upholstery courses and fitness i.e. Yoga and Pilates. There are concessions for over 65s of around 50% and also concessions for job seekers and those on employment support. The courses vary in length from 5 – 20 weeks

Cllr Clarke – We need to advertise this more

A All the information is online and we do advertise at the library and at the current centre at Pragnell Road which is open until 22 July. There will be lots of drop in activities when we open

Q Are there facilities for blind people?

A Yes we have a number of courses for people with a variety of needs

Diane Brewer – We have been funded by CEL to run an ESOL class every Friday morning at the school and this is open to the community. We also run a family learning course, I would recommend CEL to people

Q How do you determine what courses you run

A Sometimes via our funding and we also listen to our learners and residents. We also trial some different courses and look at their success.

**11. Police update - PC Kevin Swindlehurst**

PC Kevin Swindlehurst told the assembly that Burglary is down from the start of the year to beginning of July, for the same period last year there were 79 burglaries and this year it is 38. There have been lots of anti burglary patrols and motor vehicle crime is down too. Road safety remains a big concern and there have been some operations to counter this.

PC Swindlehurst stated that he wanted to tell the meeting about the Listening Campaign, the target is to reach out to a million Londoners who are not normally engaged, to increase confidence and give a voice to people. As part of this the police are asking for your contact details i.e. email, so they can pass information to you regarding crime. It is also a good way of engaging with you and want to be involved to complete the form that he brought along.

**12. Grove Park Youth Club - Written update**

Cllr Clarke reminded the LA that this has closed down and that there is some discussion about this. There are 2 houses next door to the old youth club and these are privately owned, the council is trying to get this land to make it a bigger site. They are also talking with L&Q, the officers have said that they will come back in autumn and provide a more comprehensive update. Below is the written update.

**Background** - The former Grove Park Youth Club closed in 2013. This note sets out for the Grove Park Local Assembly a short summary of the considerations for the future use of the site, the early work that has been undertaken by Council officers in that regard, and the opportunity for the local assembly to be share their views on the options for the site later this year. No decisions have been made and the views of the assembly and residents more generally will be key to shaping options for the site.

**Options for the site** - The site of the youth centre itself has been vacant for a year. There is a strip of land to the south of the site which is currently unused, or under-used, public space, which is owned by London & Quadrant. Officers are also worked to establish the proposals for the land to the east of the site, which have been demolished but not rebuilt despite there being planning permission to do so. This is a prominent site on the corner of two roads, and therefore has the capacity for a residential development, or mixed use development combining residential properties and either retail or community facilities.

In addition to this former youth club itself, there is another community facility – the W.G. Grace centre to the south of the site, although not directly adjoining. This facility is again owned by London and Quadrant.

Given the prominence of the site, the opportunity that there is to invest in the local area, and the potential partnership elements with other land owners nearby (especially in relation to the two demolished buildings, which has not yet been possible) officers have been keen to understand all of the options available on the site fully.

Broadly there are two options, and it will be important that full consideration and consultation with local residents and the local assembly takes place before a decision over the future of the site is even considered. These two options are:

1. To develop just the youth centre site. This could be done by the Council or in partnership, for instance with a housing association,.
2. Consider how other land might be included. This includes the land immediately to the south and east of the site. It could also include considering whether a development of this site might enable other developments, such as investment to update the WG Grace centre.

**Important considerations:** The nature, type and scale of community facilities in the area

It is very important that any new development contains the right type and amount of community facilities. This would include thinking about what facilities are provided on the site itself, and how they relate to the other facilities in the area, such as the WG Grace centre. The Council is leading a new house building programme – new homes, better places – which has a target of 500 new council homes, but it is very clear that it is not just about homes but building places where

people want to live with the right community infrastructure. The better places element is just as important as the new homes element.

Parking provision and outdoor space- This will be an important consideration for any development. It will be crucial that the development is well designed and has sufficient parking capacity to support residents needs – current residents as well as any new ones, and likewise the provision of outdoor spaces and play areas. Again it is these elements that contribute to building better places as well as new homes.

New housing of the right type for local residents' needs - The Council is keen to see the development of homes that meet the needs of residents. In this specific area this might include building well designed one and two bedroom properties to enable residents in the predominantly larger family housing nearby to downsize if they choose. It might also include building shared ownership or other low cost home ownership properties for local people to access home ownership for the first time.

Next steps and consultation with the local assembly - As set out above, no decisions have been made and Council officers are in the early stages of assessing the options for the site. The views of residents and the local assembly will be critical to shaping the options for the site, and on that basis it is proposed that a consultation about the options be considered by the assembly later in the year.

### **13. Community information**

#### **Lewisham Credit Union – Ian Carlisle**

Ian told the assembly that Lewisham Plus Credit Union, formerly ACTS Credit Union Ltd, was founded in 1992 and now operates across the entire borough of Lewisham (as Lewisham Plus). They are a financial co-operative with a mission to promote the financial well being of our members, by encouraging members to save what they can, and providing access to borrowing at levels that they can afford to repay. For more information visit <http://www.lewishampluscu.co.uk/index.asp>

Cllr Clarke then provided the assembly with the following updates:

- Baring Hall Hotel – Planning reference number DC/13/84513 for more information visit <http://planning.lewisham.gov.uk/online-applications/> and type in the reference number. The application is to be heard on Thursday at 7.30 and this relates to the plan to demolish the conservatory at the back of the building
- Chinbrook Dog Show 31<sup>st</sup> August – This was a lovely event last year
- Grove Park Children's Club (next to library) update – This is run by the Grove Park Community Group and there some great activities so if you have a child under 5 do go along
- Saturday 12 July 12-8pm Lewisham People's Day at Mountsfield Park

Q Is there an update on stables?

A I do not think there is any further as this has gone to the Planning Inspector, there is a public meeting in the Town Hall on 30 September to discuss this

Cllr Clarke then reminded the assembly to complete the project ideas card. These can also be dropped off at the Ringway Centre or at the Library . She then told the meeting that the next assembly will be on Tuesday 7 October from 7pm at a venue to be decided. The meeting will feature updates on the neighbourhood plans and how things are moving forward to regenerate Grove Park

There being no other business the Assembly closed at 9pm, no declarations of interest were declared at the meeting.