

## WELCOM FORUM

7.30pm Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017

Linford Methodist Church Hall

**Present:** John Purkiss-Chair, Dave Bowling-Vice Chair, Cris Bowling-Cook/Linda Mulley, Renie Bell, Sue Sammons-Councilor, Samon Odubaiy, Gordon Stevens, Iris Crane, Fred Mulley, Scott Sullivan, Lesely Keep, Jan Fawsitt, Rob Quick

**Invited Guests:** Murray James, Thurrock Council Head of IT.

**Apologies:** Frazer Massey Treasurer, Liam Judd

**Round the table introductions were carried out.**

**Murray James – Head of IT Thurrock Council** – Came to speak to us about Broadband connectivity. He confirmed that the council are aware of the situation locally and that they have had discussions with central government and national carriers about the situation. The World is going digital and they are committed for Thurrock to be ahead of the pack because of our strategic importance.

Thurrock Council already has a Digital IT strategy called Connected Thurrock, about delivery connectivity across the borough and this can be found on their website under Strategy Documents.

The Government expect 99% broadband connectivity by 2018, although Thurrock is only at 95%. Therefore they are focusing on rural areas locally. We currently have approximately 13 Superfast cabinets in the borough, but there are still 2000 premises unconnected. It is recognised the Cabinets in this area are not enabled, so there is Digital inequality across borough.

Fibre connection or wireless? Wireless connection would mean masts which residents often find unsightly. Virgin is in competition to Openreach, but Virgin fibre will only run virgin applications eg. not Sky, Talk Talk, etc. Either provider is an expensive option which the council cannot afford, but “BT Openreach & Community” is a cost effective option, much cheaper than the council could negotiate directly, however, a Council cannot apply for that, but communities can. Therefore the Council is proposing for Community Forums to submit a request to Openreach and they will give us a grant to cover the community cost. (in the region of £5,000). Those present unanimously agreed this proposal.

**Action Point:** Frazer Massey was nominated to contact Openreach formally on behalf of the Forum requesting costs for the Community fibre option. Website and webpage form to be completed. Murray James has kindly agreed to assist Frazer if needed. [mjames@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:mjames@thurrock.gov.uk) .

**Action Point:** Murray to supply details of postcodes of Boxes in our locality.

## **Minutes of the previous meeting & Matters Arising**

**Sports hall** : There will be a meeting during September to discuss the expansion of the school and how this will affect the sports hall. JF has asked for further information on this issue.

**Action Point:** Kate Draper will be asked to supply the information.

**Neighbourhood watch** – It was reported this is going okay, some books are being delivered but there are more to come. There has been no feedback from the police lately.

SS has reported the caravan dumped in Bata Avenue, it is believed a youngster may be living in it. **Action Point:** Sampson agreed to look into this aspect.

**Library/ Bata Heritage** : Scot confirmed there is no update on the Library at present. English Heritage have been approached for a grant for the Bata Heritage Centre for artefact renovation and to set up a mobile interpretation centre. The Bata family has generously donated £1000 to help. CBS has also given a grant.

**Action Point:** Forum to write to the Bata Family thanking them for their generosity.

**Kings head. West Tilbury** : No further update at present.

**Hampshire Gardens:** No further update at present..

**Community Fun Day:** Everyone agreed it had been a very successful day. JP gave thanks to everyone who helped. Walsh again this year had donated £5,000. FM has asked if the profit from this year's event can be 'ringfenced' for next year. JF reported that there is interest in extending the day into the evening next year. The Fun Day committee will be meeting soon to discuss this possibility and plan next year's event well in advance. There were varying points and concerns raised about whether this was wise. They are looking for some new committee members. Kerry, Liam, Jan, John, Frazer and Sandra presently make up the Fun Day committee.

**Action Point:** Forum to write to Walsh thanking them for their donation.

**Action Point:** Anyone wishing to volunteer for the Fun Day Committee, please contact one of the existing members.

**Treasurers Report:** Fraser sent in the following report:

The Bank has recently confirmed the new details we supplied and should receive up to date statements going forward. Apart from the Fun Day expenses no other monies have been spent since the AGM.

Fun Day – Walsh kindly donated £5,000 which is over and above the £4,000 which was expected. This means the total estimate profit and loss for the Fun Day is around £1,800 (still awaiting the final few stalls amount, hence estimate).

Total Fun Day outgoings £3,804 – Total Fun Day Income £5,685 close estimate

Full breakdown for the Fun Day will be provided when last few staff amounts are confirmed.

**Noticeboards :** It was decided that keys to the new noticeboards would be limited to Fraser FOGP, NW and Secretary of the Forum. Current notices are now out of date and must be renewed to keep interest.

**Thames Nature Park:** No further information received.

**Friends of Gobions Park:** JF reported that Grays Athletics had kindly given a £500 grant for the skate ramps. Picnics in park have been arranged and have been successful. At these events the organisers have also been promoting the Forum. The FOGP AGM has been arranged for 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 8pm, ET Village Hall. The committee are looking for extra people to help with fundraising etc.

Scot reported that an application has been made to the Community Development Fund for £10,800 in addition to the £1200 friends have raised. The plan is to replace signs and make the park more welcoming. JP passed on to JF other information about a fund raising meeting they might like to follow up.

**Thames Crossing Option C –** JF reported that the next public meeting is being organised by the Thames Crossing Proposal Group at 2pm, Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Sept., at the Brandon Groves Community Centre, South Ockendon. As many people as possible should attend, to ensure ET and Linford residents are represented.

A Taskforce with Thurrock council has now been set up. George Abbott Leader of the TCPG has been co-opted on to the taskforce. Lee Hughes has been working closely with Havering council. We need clarification as to whether they are against ALL further crossings in Thurrock or just which route of Option C. Air pollution and Health issues seem to be being suppressed by Highways England and we need air monitoring statistics for our local area.

**106 Agreement from Bata Field Development :** A sub-committee of the Forum had met with representatives of ICENI and Thurrock Council Planning Dept. , seeking clarification of the use of 106 monies from the Bata Field Development. A freedom of information request had yielded only sparse information on how monies had or will be allocated and spent.

It was explained that due to the planning permission ultimately being given by the Secretary of State in 2010 and not the Council, details of how the 106 funds would be apportioned weren't as specific as usual and would not all be used to improve infrastructure and services directly in the area of the development, being E.Tilbury.

In particular the Forum wanted an explanation on council plans for a sum in excess of £450,000 which was listed as being towards the building of a pedestrian bridge over the railway line, and in what context and by whom this decision had been made, as there is no evidence of local consultation.

The Forum is aware that this amount, despite now being worth some £550,000, would not be sufficient to build such a bridge, especially in light of current disability legislation for low gradient ramps and/or lifts as a necessity. Details of where such a bridge would be sited have also not been made known. We are also concerned by

the knowledge that if Thurrock Council does not spend this money on the identified project within a 5 year period of receiving the monies, they are automatically returned to Persimmons!

The Forum challenged whether this sum of money could be used for other infrastructure projects greatly needed in the area and were informed that this would require a Deed of Variation to be agreed by the builders of the development, ie Persimmons. The Council stated that we the Forum would have to approach Persimmons ourselves with this request if the community agreed an alternative would benefit the community more.

Once we have received outline plans of where this bridge is proposed to be sited and/or if the Council or ICENI can provide further information as to where the rest of the funding would come from, and if Network Rail would give its permission for a pedestrian bridge over its rails, the Forum intends to canvas the local community for their opinion on how we should proceed.

**Action Point:** When TC provide details of proposed bridge site, the Forum will look to undertake public meetings and questionnaire.

**Doctors Surgery** – No decision been made yet. SS. Confirmed an offer had been accepted and the matter is now with lawyers and NHS England. In the meantime College health are acting as caretakers, but this will be going out for tender again. A considerable amount of interest has been shown in the tender process by contractors. The PPG should lead what patients want in this area, we understand the AGM for the PPG will be held in October.

#### **AOB.**

Dave Bowling advised there is a First Responders ball/80s Night planned on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept. at the Regency ballroom, Stanford Le Hope, if anyone would like tickets.

**Community speedwatch team** – Jan Fawsett advised that she and Bob had attended training and Bob was now the single point of contact, with Jackie Philips contact for W.Tilbury. They had requested 2 radar guns, but areas must be risk assessed before they can become active. A recent CS team newsletter update highlighted there are now 76 active speedwatch groups in Essex. Over 8,000 offences have been recorded and passed to police. It is envisaged that the speedwatch areas may operate at the top of East Tilbury Road, Princess Margaret Road near the school and Coronation Avenue.

Samson >> Community Liaison is Karen Dobson's replacement. He introduced himself and gave a brief description of his background and explained his role. He intends to hold surgeries at food bank, post office and West Tilbury.

**Action Point:** Samson to supply 5 posters for PO, Forum noticeboard and Coalhouse noticeboard.

Apparently the Bus users group is looking for volunteers. DB taking the information to Rosemary and Bob in the village who may be interested to become involved.

There is a new Education Community officer at Thameside Nature park called Sophie Turpin. They are apparently looking for Community volunteers.

**Action Point:** Jan Fawsitt agreed to volunteer.

**Date of Next Meeting**

7.30pm. Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September 17. Linford Methodist Church.

Tea & Coffee from 7pm.