

Minutes of meeting of St Augustine's Community Together Residents' Association(ACT) held in St Augustine's Hall, Norwich, on 4 December 2013

1. Present: 23. Non-resident guests included Cllr Richard Bearman, Alan Edwards (Norwich City Council Parking Team), Shona Heazle (Broadland Housing Association) and PCSO Jo Longstaff.
2. Apologies: Jacqui Burgoyne (AgeUK), Clare Dennis, David and Heather English, Lyn Honeywood Hall, Ian Robertson and Cllrs L. Howard, S. Jackson and A. Stammers.
3. Minutes of last meeting (18 September 2013) approved.
4. Matters arising:
 - a. Cllr Richard Bearman reported that the City & County Councils' Joint Highways Agency has approved the installation of a new zebra-type pedestrian crossing in St Augustine's Street. It was number two in the Agency's priority list after Aylsham Road. Work scheduled to start April 2014.
 - b. Other local road infrastructure improvements: installation of bollards at splitter island in New Botolph Street, tactile paving at Botolph Street/New Botolph Street junction and repairs to block-work in the St Augustine's Gyratory are still awaiting budgetary approval.
 - c. Bicycle contra flow in Magdalen Street & Cowgate approved but plans not yet available.
 - d. Noise nuisance and Gojus cafe bar on St Augustine's Street: Cllr Bearman informed the meeting of the details of its license, which were discussed. He reported that a noise abatement order had been served and monitors installed at the owner's expense. Should there be any further problems reported a late-night refreshment review can be requested. The Talk (Oak Street) had also received a noise abatement order. The lease held by the business currently operating from the premises is due for renewal in January. Adrian Holmes noted that he has invited Talk management to attend an ACT meeting but they had not responded.
5. Parking in Leonards Street and the St Augustine's parking zone areas.

Residents spoke on the issues affecting them: loss of garages and car parking spaces in the area has put increasing pressure on remaining on- and off-street spaces. The small car park off Leonards Street had originally been for residents only but the sign had disappeared and it is now regularly used by non-residents, forcing residents to find parking spaces often a long way from their homes. Alan Edwards (Norwich City Council Parking Team) spoke to residents concerns. He noted that Leonards Street car park was historically a "Grant Improvement" car park left to the residents to control, with a locking barrier and a residents only sign. This had not worked: the barrier padlock had been repeatedly vandalised (superglued etc.) and the sign stolen. The land on which the car park is located is managed by the City Council's Housing Department. They are considering three options:

 - i. Extend permit holders' zone to car park, making it in effect residents only.
 - ii. Erect lockable posts in each parking bay so people can rent a space.
 - iii. Leave things as they are – i.e. a free-for-all, first-come-first served car park

The general view of the meeting was that option 2 was impractical and would attract vandalism, while option 3 (do nothing) was unacceptable. Option 1 was therefore generally approved of, though with provisos: a new 'residents only' sign needed to be erected, the views of local residents and traders should be consulted more widely, the rights of the Norwich Preservation Trust (who had parking rights to part of the Leonards Street car park) should be taken into account, that a mixture of permit holder and time-limited "visitor/shopper" spaces be considered (as in Duoro Place and Charles Square). Discussion then turned to parking in Sussex Street. It was felt that the balance between permit holder palaces and short-stay (2 hours) visitor places had become unbalanced now that Norwich Union had moved out. The visitor spaces often full all day, while permit holder spaces are empty. Local traders felt there needed to be more short-stay spaces available. The discussion ended with a majority decision that a residents only sign for the Leonards Street car park was needed as soon as possible.

6. Broadland Housing Association issues. The Chair welcomed Shona Heazle for BHA.

There was a great deal of flytipping still at the bins in The Lathes. It was suggested that the bins be moved to the old compound, which BHA lease from BT. BHA want to put a cover over it.

7. Street cleaning and dog fouling. Signs had put up in Sussex Street but these did not appear to have had any effect. There may be only one of two dog owners allowing this, persistently, and they need to be caught and fined. The question was raised as to how often the Council's contractors weed the curbs and pavements in the area. It didn't seem to be very often judging by height of weeds and grass in some streets this summer.

8. Open Mike session: Merle Creagh-Barry (Hindes Yard) felt that there needed to be a central community notice board in St Augustine's. Stuart McLaren said this idea had been suggested before but council have always said it would be too expensive. It was suggested that funding be sought elsewhere, e.g. Visit Norwich. Carrie Sant said that if anyone knew of anyone who was in need, her Mission had food. Adrian Holmes mentioned the work of Friends of Train Wood – the area had now been designated community asset. FTW are negotiating a lease to manage the area sustainably from Norfolk County Council. They had received a grant from the Wensum Valley Project. Nick Hall said that Cruse Bereavement trust had now moved into their new offices at 68 St Augustine's Street. This will include a small charity shop. They are looking for volunteers from 10 to 2 to staff the shop. Jeremy Hal noted that the turning space at the eastern end of Bakers Road was being used for parking.

9. Police Report: PCSO Jo Longstaff gave a report on the 3-month, forced closure of a house in Ebenezer Place (crack house closure) because it was being used for drug abuse. Tenant was being rehoused elsewhere and police were trying to ensure tenant did not return (she was a vulnerable person and had been an easy prey to drug dealers). Graffiti in Leonards Street and Howards Terrace was reported.

10. Date of next meeting: there would be a special supper on 21 January to celebrate ACT's 10th birthday like to attend. Formal invitations would be sent out in due course.