

Purfleet on Thames Community Forum  
 Minutes of open meeting held Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011  
 Venue: Fondu Sports Club

No	Item
1	<p><b>Welcome</b>            John Rowels, Chair of Purfleet Community Forum welcomed everyone to the first Open meeting of the forum for 2011.</p>
2	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b>            Councillor Oliver Garish; Councillor Andy Smith, Larry Collins, Ian Stone (Forum Treasurer)</p>
3.	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b>            Minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010 were approved as a true record.</p>
4.	<p><b>Updates/Matters arising from Previous Meeting (28<sup>th</sup> November 2010)</b>            White lines: These will be back within 6-8 weeks. Thanks to Lynn for following up. Three other outstanding issues from previous meeting will be addresses in due course.</p>
5.	<p><b>Guests Speakers</b></p> <p><b>Nathalie Warren (Essex Savers Credit Union)</b></p> <p>Nathalie made a presentation to the forum on the Essex Savers Credit Union. The Union was set up out of a desperate need of residents in Thurrock to save but not in the banks because of the loss of confidence. The Union's application to the FSA was approved in 2009 and has been insured as a provident society. The Union has one main collection point in Chelmsford, Essex and operates with the support of volunteers. Small collection points are in Tilbury and Corringham with a plan to have more over the coming months.</p> <p>There were discussions on possible collection points in Purfleet. The main suggestion is to consider using the post office as a collection point. Criteria for volunteers include willingness to learn, to listen, to support other people and be patient with distressed clients. The minimum opening amount is £1 with a membership fee of £4 for life. The highest amount of loan so far has been £3,500.</p> <p>Even though residents felt that the credit union is a fantastic idea, the following concerns raised :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of CRB checks for the volunteers;</li> <li>• Huge running costs; and</li> <li>• Systems put in place to ensure repayment of loans.</li> </ul> <p>Nathalie explained that despite the fact that the union is running on deficit at the moment, fundraising will help fill the gaps. Again, she mentioned that the cost of local people not being able to get credit is much higher than the running costs so despite the concerns, it is still a worthwhile venture. With a central point for all 14 districts, it is expected that running costs will also reduce.</p> <p>Nathalie shared printed copies of the presentation with forum members present.</p>

6.	<p><b>Meetings Attended and Correspondence</b></p> <p><b>1. Grays Education Center</b>  Stephane and John attended a seminar at the Grays Education Center to learn ideas about strengthening the forum in the midst of ongoing budget cuts. It has been suggested that funding for the forum’s activities comes to an end in April. From then, only administrative costs will be borne by the council. It is important for the forum to be creative and find innovative ways of raising funds to enable it function efficiently.</p> <p><b>2. Meeting with Sustrans</b>  Stephane also attended a meeting with Sustrans, who are planning to undertake a feasibility study into developing a cycle path in Purfleet. Sustrans is currently running 2 projects; one in Tilbury Fort and the other in <b>Colehouse?</b> Fort where they are planning to convert a 10-12 mile path into a cycle path. The study in Purfleet, will assess the feasibility of a cycle path linking the RSPB to Davy Down. Sustrans is happy to come to next meeting to explain.</p> <p>Residents reiterated how dangerous it is to walk by the by-pass and noted how badly it reflects on Purfleet and the council.</p> <p><b>3. Derelict Buildings</b>  The forum received a letter asking residents to identify derelict buildings for disposal due to concerns over appearance and safety. The hotel in Stone House Lane and the Thames Board Mill are the only buildings identified.</p>
7	<p><b>Business Discussion – Ideas on how to take the forum forward, Fundraising</b></p> <p>From the meeting attended by Stephane and John at the Grays Education Centre, several ideas for taking the forum forward in the face of budget cuts were postulated. One of them is for the forum to become a charitable trust. This has implication for how the forum functions. The forum needs to get a better understanding of what it entails to become a charitable trust and whether it is the best option to take or not. Other options are for the forum to either register as a limited company attached to a charity <b>or a small charity?</b> Due to the lack of clarity about the implications in having either status, residents agreed that the forum retains its current status and continues to play the key role of being the main link between the council and residents and springboard for information sharing. Meanwhile, members will explore ways of raising funds for specific projects. The forum needs to raise at least £4000 for such projects.</p> <p>One key point mentioned is that the forum doesn’t have to be a charity to be able to raise funds. It is however important to link to the HMRC for a number to be able to do so.</p> <p><b>Next Steps</b>  Put together a fundraising working group to take this forward.</p> <p><b>Committee Membership</b>  Ama Bartimeus was nominated by Tim Ryan as the Secretary of the Committee. This was seconded by Gareth and unanimously approved by members. Demus Lee was also nominated to rejoin the Committee by Tim. This was seconded by Moira Pollington and also unanimously approved by members.</p>
8.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>

- **Parking, Roads and Transport**

- Residents parking in Purfleet School Loop causing blockages.
- There seems to be some issues with the road leading to the traffic Purfleet school traffic light.
- Lorries flouting weight limits on the London Road.
- No parking restrictions. Obstructions. Health and Safety concerns.

The Forum needs to find out more what the plans are for road markings and explore whether loop can be closed off completely.

**Action: Maria Buckley and Lynn to get Highway Team on site to get a better understanding of the problems and in order to enable the Forum make concrete suggestions.**

- **Crime/Thefts**

A resident noted that crimes are going unreported to the police with some individuals planning to take the law into their own hands. Because crimes go unreported, there is a false impression that crime rates have gone down and therefore not much need for policing in the community. Lack of action by the police was posited to be one of the reasons why crime goes unreported. It was however stressed that that *“if we don’t involve the police, we cannot report that they don’t do anything”*. However, it is important for the police to give feedback on cases reported to help instil confidence in residents and motivate them to come to the police instead of either saying nothing and suffering in consequence or taking the law into their own hands. Despite the challenges of communication around cases reported, the Neighbourhood Officer is there to help address these issues to the best of her ability.

- **St. Stephens Trust**

Demus provided some information on the new status of St. Stephen’s church. St. Stephens has been transformed into a trust to support a number of organisations in Purfleet, which otherwise would be getting defunct. The Vicar, Andy, formed the trust to help attract funding for local organisations including the children’s play groups.

The Forum can also explore raising funds from this new Trust. Andy would be happy to attend the next meeting to provide some more information.

- **Fundraising**

A resident suggested raising funds from organising a half marathon using existing facilities.

- **Community Forum Hub (Office)**

John suggested exploring the possibility of using the old newsagent, opposite the rail station as a hub for the community forum. Members were all happy for the Committee to find out more and feedback to the group.

**Action: Committee (Stephane/John)**

- **Thames Gateway Community Development Fund**

The last money was given to the Fund on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2011. The future of the fund is now unclear

- **Nomination of The Fleet as Best Local Business**

The Forum Committee will write a letter in support of this nomination.

9.	<b>Date and Venue of Next Meeting</b> 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2011 at the refurbished Barn on the High House complex.
10.	<b>End of Meeting</b>  John both thanked everyone attending the meeting and hoped to see everyone at the next meeting.