



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

For ease of reference topics appear as separate subjects rather than in the order discussed. Items do not appear in any order of priority, and may appear under an unlinked agenda item (e.g. AOB)

Meeting Minutes 31.01.23

1. Welcome and Meeting Etiquette

2. Apologies

Moira Pollington and Cllr Qaisar Abbas.

3. Agree Minutes

Minutes of 29.11.22 were agreed and are available on our website.

4. Guest Speaker – Joe Cooper, Thurrock Libraries

A very interesting talk was given by Joe Cooper about the value and purpose of the public library service and its material benefits which include health, education, literacy and equality, in addition to raising economic productivity.

As it is a statutory service its existence will continue despite the council's financial situation, but it will not remain in the Thameside Theatre building.

Thurrock Libraries belongs to the Libraries Consortium affording the use of 'my library app'. You can select from 9 million items which can be sent to your library of choice for collection. eBooks, audio books and magazines are also available free of charge through Libby, a library reading app.

Other services include:

A summer reading challenge run in conjunction with Children's Services and Reading Agency. A home link service where volunteers deliver books and other materials to the housebound. Providing SIM cards with unlimited calls and texts with 4-6 gigabytes of data for 6 months for residents on low incomes who cannot afford to run a phone. Available from Belhus Library. Assistance with voter authentication certification for the upcoming elections.

Printing service via a wi-fi app (there is a charge for printing).

A local studies inventory is currently under way and Joe would be happy to arrange a tour. The only ancestry digital service available is Find My Past and access to the 1921 census will only be available until the end of March due to the financial constraints of the council.

5. Updates

Ken Dytor - PCRL

Ken informed the meeting that active discussions are taking place to bring funding into the scheme and that all is looking very promising and very positive.

When asked for an update on the tv and film studios Ken said they were in the process of forming a collaboration agreement with HHPP, SE College, BackStage Centre and the council. The vision has now evolved from large studios to smart studios and for this to be more education driven with South Essex College. Ken said there is tremendous interest in this, along with global players.



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Duncan Innes - Swan

Duncan said of the 61 homes currently under construction it was expected that 34 homes would be completed and occupied during 2023 and the remaining 27 be completed in 2024.

The 61 homes consist of 16 x2 bed; 37 x 3 bed; 8 x4 bed.

34 of the x3 and x4 bed properties will be shared ownership and currently 900 expressions of interest have been received.

Shared ownership will be in perpetuity unless owners opt to staircase up. The minimum acquisition is 25% up front and then staircasing is normally carried out in 5% increments. It was said the sales team had not yet decided on the price of the properties, but Zoopla is advertising £135,000 for a 25% ownership.

Local people wanting to buy outright will have the opportunity to purchase from the 27 dwellings being completed in 2024, some of which will be 3 bed.

The target for opening the sales centre is March but the first 34 dwellings will not be occupied until all are complete, at which time they will all be decorated and carpeted just before occupancy. This is expected to be October/November even though the first dwellings will likely be complete in May.

An estate management company will look after unadopted roads and the play area. The bulk of the service charge will be for on plot facilities with a small element going towards estate wide management.

The play area is for use by the whole community but may not be opened when the first dwellings are occupied. They are looking to redesign the equipment as when it was installed it was found to be too high and intrusive. There will now be enhanced screening for neighbours close to the play area and trees nearer the boundary, but this may not stop people being able to see into Hollow Cottages when on their balconies. Swan is also thinking about how to stop play area users parking by Hollow Cottages and blocking pedestrian access to Hollow Cottages.

Duncan was asked if he knew if there was a right of way between the site's boundary fence and the Caspian fences. He was not aware of a right of way but will try to find out and also suggested they make enquires with their freeholder management company.

It was asked if the takeover by Sanctuary of Swan would have any bearing on the future.

The response was that it was actually termed a 'business combination' and that in the first instance would comprise of legalities and finances, to then be followed by a hand over expected to take 18 months.

General

The community hub fridge has been officially opened and there are plans to open a community supermarket later this year in the old community café building.

Due to possible health and safety issues when transferring hot liquids a mulled wine urn has been purchased.

Planning:

There is a plan to knock down the retail shops on Lakeside Retail Park (where TK Max is sited) and replace with a multi-storey lorry deck with logistic storage.

The other planning concerns relate to M25 Junction 31 location, where there are 2 logistics applications, both of which are on greenbelt. Application reference numbers: 22/01370/FUL and 22/01672/FUL



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Council's Financial Issues:

A link to the Government's consultation will be distributed.

Cllr Lee Watson

The council is only going to provide statutory services – waste, library, children and social care.

The Government are providing some money for services, but this will have to be repaid.

Full council meeting is due on 22nd February when they hope to have the Best Value Report which will need to go to the Secretary of State before being made public.

When asked about council tax increases Lee explained that without a referendum the maximum increase is 5%, which includes adult social care. This ceiling can be bypassed by requesting the Government to grant a dispensation waiver. A request for this has been submitted and the response is due by 22nd February.

Bins – trying to get answers about bin collections along with a schedule, and Lee informed the meeting that the council will no longer pick up fly tip waste which has been cleaned up by community groups.

McColl's – making efforts to establish what will happen to the shop now that it belongs to Morrisons.

Lee will be holding a surgery in The Hub on Saturday morning.

6. Matters Arising

None.

7. AOB

To hold an event for the Coronation we would need supporters and volunteers, and the programme would need to be completely different from the Jubilee event. If no suitable suggestions are received by the Forum then the occasion will not be marked.

Do we want to carry on with Christmas street lighting or do something else?

The company we use is not reliable, but we cannot afford the alternatives.

The following was directed towards Ken (PCRL):

The importance of having a permanent living Christmas tree included within the town square that could be lit up, and the benefit of town square auxiliary lighting.

Purfleet Heritage & Military Centre are currently holding a 1953 flood exhibition, and the centre is now open Wednesdays, Thursdays, Sundays and BH Mondays.

To be able to vote you now require photographic ID or a voter authority certificate which, along with bus passes, can be obtained from the Hub.

Warm Space – available at both the Hub and Mulberry Drive complex.

There is no community noticeboard by St Stephen's but posters are displayed in the noticeboards by the station, the old recreation ground and the Fleet.



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8. Next Meeting

28th March at 7.30pm, venue to be confirmed.

Our speaker will be a senior member from the council's Housing Team.