

# **St Margaret's with St Nicholas' Ward Forum**

## **Chairman's Annual Report**

**11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 to 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

As with every other organisation in the UK, the Forum has not met since the general GovUK lockdown instigated on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that is not to say that your Committee has been idle

The Forum met on two occasions during the period under report, on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The Committee last met as a body on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Be that as it may, there have been continuous electronic communication with the Committee members throughout the period. Other activities, especially with outside bodies such as South Wootton Parish Council (Neighbourhood Plan) have been on hold as lockdown dominates.

**Matters arising from the Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019.** Noise: As the meeting concluded that the Licensing Act is signally failing to tackle this serious nuisance the act needed to be reviewed An invitation has been sent to Chief Constable David Marshall and Joanna Reid (Licensing Authority) for them to address Forum on the matter of noise levels, particularly that associated with Festival Too on the Tuesday Market Place. BCKLWN replied to the invitation, saying that "It is generally considered that a level of 95dB at the mixing desk is the minimum level necessary for audiences to enjoy music events, so a level of 100dB at the front of the stage would not be unexpected."

**Local Neighbourhood Plan.** We are still awaiting a meeting with the chairman of the South Wootton Parish Council.

**St James' Medical Practice.** Transfer to the new premises remains the practice's desire. No comment was made to our request on information for access to the site for those who do not drive, such as the elderly and infirm and young mothers without their own transport. There are rumours – unconfirmed – that there are second thoughts about the proposed move.

**Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)** Forum has made its feelings known regarding the forthcoming BCKLWN HAZ application to Heritage England (HE). Forum supports the Thurley/Harris option regarding Southgates Park. It is of interest that the park was created under the King George V Memorial Fund. There are ten such King George V Memorial Fund open spaces within the PE30 postcode.

To have them listed the local authority needs to apply to The Fields Association – successors to the King George V Memorial Fund and the King George V Playing Fields Association. BCKLWN has so done for nine of these open spaces, but not for Southgates Park which makes one feel that it has had intentions on this park for a number of decades.

**Harding's Way.** There is a recommendation that Hardings Way be opened to all forms of traffic, which would create a rat-run of Church Street and Stonegate Street at its northern end. We have written to BCKLWN yet again and to the county council. We are advised that test borings are to take place in October but have not been able to learn or confirm the purpose nor at whose behest they are being undertaken.

**Hillington Square Development.** We have written to BCKLWN planning (comment attached) emphasising the poor design of the proposed new build, the lack of original and inventive choice of building materials on the Bridge Street and All Saints' Street facades, construction vibration and its effect on the listed buildings in those two streets and to request serious consideration for residents' parking permits.

Those who live in Bridge Street and All Saints' Street have formed their own residents' association, chaired by Richard Waite and with Anita Carnell as its secretary.

**Licensing.** License applications continue to mushroom. In then past year we have made comments to the Licensing Committee on Bar 100 (100 Norfolk Street) against their desired weekend extension to 05.00, on Catch Fish Restaurant (Norfolk Street) for a weekend licence to 04.30, on Kudos (Norfolk Street) for an extension of their premises, on Cloud 9 (9 High Street) on their application for weekend late-night closures and on Whatahoot (7a King Street) application for a gin distillery and late night licensing hours. Unfortunately, the Licensing Acts works in favour of applicants and it is extremely difficult under the present legislation for there to be reductions in requested licensing hours unless the Norfolk Constabulary intervenes.

NB Whatahoot. Due to an oversight Sally and I neglected to properly consult the committee before submitting the forum's response and so it does not reflect the views of all committee members. (Response attached).

**Late Night Economy.** A request from Forum to NCC on the cost of policing the late night economy (52 weekends per year plus Christmas and New Year weekends) led to a response that the cost to the tax payer for ten police constables, a police sergeant and three riot vans per weekend was £1,060,000. Of this the lion's share comes from the tax payer's contribution to central government (income tax) and the rest from the BCKLWN NCC levy from the

community charge. Forum is of the opinion that the licensed premises should foot this bill and negotiations continue with BCKLWN for their opinion on this matter.

**Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO)**, restrictions relating to drinking in the street and in public places such as local authority parks and churchyards, are about to be extended for a further three years within the entire perimeter of the Ward.

Donation to True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum. The Forum was asked to contribute to the museum to help purchase Zoom equipment to support its work with local schools. We consulted the committee and this resulted in four for, three against and three abstentions. Our grants - small as they are - are there to benefit those living or working in the ward. TY's request did not meet this criteria. Moreover we do not have any form of funding, just the original package of £8,000 granted when the forum was set up and which we husband prudently and only distribute as and when the need arises.

Dr Julian W S Litten  
Chairman  
September 2020