

St Margaret's with St Nicholas Ward Forum Quarterly meeting February 10, 2016 - report

Professor Brian Falconbridge in the chair.

1: Business Improvement District Campaign. Darren Taylor, campaign vice-chairman, chairman of the Town Centre Partnership and MD of KLFM explained what a BID is and how, if accepted by local businesses, the ward might benefit. He was accompanied by Carl Hedger, who has been appointed BID Campaign Manager and who has worked on a similar BID in Norwich.

Parameters of the BID area are Tuesday Market Place, north side, Railway Road, Millfleet and South Quay. The proposal will be put later in the year to businesses who will vote – under a rather complicated system to reflect both size of business and rateable value. If agreed there will be a mandatory levy to provide funds for projects to generally improve the business climate. As an example, both men emphasised the considerable nature of the heritage of the BID area, which could be employed to far greater effect to bring visitors to the town, both from the capital and from the holiday areas on the coast.

2. Constitution. One change proposed:

8(f) Annual General Meeting. Dr Mike Brindle, queried that AOB items should be subject to the agreement of the chairman. Wording was changed to:

8 (f) consideration of any other business notified to the secretary prior to the start of the meeting. The suggested change was accepted and the revised constitution was then approved and adopted.

3: Treasurers' report. There had been very little expenditure in the last quarter and funds stand at £7313.92

4. Update of Activity – questions and further information.

Website. Dr Brindle regretted that greater progress had not been made. Wayne Hart explained that this was because of the volume of his own business which was taking up a considerable amount of his time and because of a fire at the premises where he had been lodging and where plant and material was located. He hoped that by the end of March/beginning of April all would be accomplished. Rob Archer requested the inclusion of a discussion forum and this was agreed.

Silo site South Quay. It was regretted that the borough could not be more specific about the involvement of the forum in the procurement of consultants. Forum will continue to press for this, will maintain its interest in the site and its development and will do as much as possible to ensure that the organisation is not sidelined.

Parking. General dissatisfaction was expressed over numerous aspects of all the changes, which have and are taking place throughout the ward under the aegis of the county council (NCC). The lack of consultation and sheer difficulty of attempting to deal with the authority was forcefully expressed. The feeling is that residents – the very people who live in the ward – are being disregarded by the authority and its officials, which are based many miles away from the area, do not understand the particular situation and difficulties – nor wish to.

Among points made were:

Confusion over parking on the South Quay and the need for properly worded information on the meter payment board there.

No overnight parking provision.

Only residents of King Staithe Square and South Quay being eligible for *residents only provision*

Loss of spaces for customers and clients of local businesses, in particular the hospitality sector.

Agreed: 1) the forum will write to the leader and chief executive of NCC, stating that officials do not appear to be thoroughly familiar with nor understand the local situation and have refused to come to Lynn to meet residents . 2) A comprehensive list of grievances over parking – including high charges made by the borough council and Freebridge housing – will be compiled and addressed to the borough. The need for dedicated residents' parking will be expressed once again and a further letter sent to the portfolio holder, David Pope.

The Mart. A complaint that residents are again suffering because parking provision becomes even tighter during the period and a suggestion that, for this period, there should be flexibility to allow use of the multi-storey car park by season ticket holders. Subsequently this suggestion was taken up by Cllr Bambridge and turned down. Contact: sally@smithandturff.demon.co.uk for a copy of the reasoning.

5. Any Other Business.

Derelict buildings. Ken Hill introduced a list of buildings, which are having a deleterious effect upon the ward and asked the forum to further support the actions of the Civic Society and approach the borough to urge employment of its powers of compulsory purchase order legislation to address the problem. He said: 'Other authorities, notably Great Yarmouth, have been dealing with hundreds of such buildings through compulsory purchase orders. West Norfolk has scored just one. Can we urge the borough council to build on this achievement and bring these important buildings back into use? The process doesn't cost them much, their rates income would increase, and there would be a significant improvement to the environment and, in particular, public enjoyment of the waterfront area.' Examples of such buildings are: Purfleet House, the Somerfeld & Thomas warehouse and its lean-to, plus 5 King Street. The forum will write making the case.

Flood Protection/Prevention. Sally Turff, clerk, highlighted the vulnerability of the ward to flooding and the fact that many elderly and vulnerable people are resident. There appears to be a lack of knowledge among residents over the measures they can take in advance to help alleviate the situation, the practicalities of what can be done when there is a flood and confusion over which authority is responsible for what. The steering group is going to investigate with a view to providing such information but also with the possibility of organising an event when experts can be questioned coupled with an exhibition of products such as air-brick covers and easily-manageable flood boards. Members are asked to pass on useful information. Email sally@smithandturff.demon.co.uk

Next quarterly meeting. Wednesday, May 11. Nick Daubney, retiring borough council leader. Subject, his views on the ward and development within it.