

St Margaret's with St Nicholas' Ward Forum

Chairman's Quarterly Report

11th September 2020 to 10th December 2020

Welcome to the first 'on line' quarterly report. I'm sorry that we were not able to meet at Marriott's on 8th December but your Committee and I are hopeful that the next Forum may indeed be in the round, COVID-19 permitting.

Whilst we may not have met as a full Forum your committee has been busying itself with a number of issues. We have also adopted an initiative of looking at all planning and licensing applications within the ward, commenting on them where required, and some of those issues will appear later in this report. We have also been busy as far as the Heritage Action Zone is concerned as well as the Town Investment Plan.

Fuller details are now on the forum website; click on the underlined subjects in this report.

St James' Medical Practice. Regardless of a number of comments from the Forum, mainly related to those who do not have private transport, transfer to a new premises off Edward Benefer Way remains the practice's desire. No comment was made to our request for information regarding a potential bus-stop to serve the premises. We continue to watch the situation. (for fuller details of this and other matters click on the underlined topic, [St James Medical Practice](#))

Heritage Action Zone. The forum has made its feelings known regarding the forthcoming BCKLWN HAZ application to HE. Furthermore, Forum supports the recommendation of conserving the facades of the High Street buildings, particularly the upper floors, and have encouraged BCKLWN to investigate the possibility of utilising the empty spaces above the shops for residential purposes.

Harding's Way. There is a recommendation that Hardings Way be opened to all forms of traffic, This would affect the ward because it will create a rat-run of Church Street and Stonegate Street at its northern end. We have written to BCKLWN to express our concerns and to Norfolk County Council. (see [Harding's Way](#)). However, it looks as though the borough's desire will be forthcoming, which will only lead to severe vehicular congestion at its northern end, where Boal Street, Bridge Street, Stonegate Street and Church Street

converge. If it does go ahead then there will be the need for a pedestrian-controlled crossing at the east end of Boal Street.

Hillington Square Development. We have written to BCKLWN planning commenting on the poor design of the proposed new build, the lack of ingenuity of building materials on the Bridge Street and All Saints' Street facades, on issues relating to 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 similar feelings regarding the facades and height of these buildings and have formed their own residents' association, chaired by Richard Waite and with Anita Carnell as its secretary. They have now met with Feilden & Mawson and Freebridge and have received an assurance from them that all of the listed buildings in both streets will be assessed by a civil engineer and a structural engineer prior to any works being done and that they – Freebridge – will indemnify the freeholders against any structural damage. Your chairman is working closely with Anita Carnell, giving appropriate advice as and when required. One area of concern relates to raising Chestnut House from four storeys to five; BCKLWN planning has expressed its feelings on the matter, but Freebridge have said that if this cannot be done then the entire project might have to be abandoned as they need to create a sufficient number of new dwellings to make the project financially viable.

Hillington Square Foundation Stone. Your chairman asked Freebridge of the whereabouts of the original 1966 foundation stone, set into the north wall of Millfleet Court. It appears that it was damaged whilst being removed and was disposed of. Freebridge has undertaken to provide a replica and the forum is now searching out the original inscription. We have asked for this to be extended to give reference to the recent Wayne Hemmingsway improvements.

Licensing. License applications continue to mushroom. In the past three months we have made further comments to the Licensing Committee on a first-floor extension required by [Dr Thirsty's/Kudos \(Norfolk Street\)](#), making particular reference to the preservation of the 17C terracotta high-relief plaque of St George and the Dragon on its east wall, and an application for a 10.00 - 04.00 (eighteen hours) license for a fish and chip restaurant, The Catch, also in Norfolk Street, to which we are opposed. We also requested a reduction in the requested hours of opening for [Whatahoot gin distillery](#) at 7a King Street, as did residents, and were successful in having the hours reduced. We were not the only ones to comment on this application, the majority of distress being exhibited by those who lived in buildings immediately adjacent to 7a King Street. There was some debate about this in committee and not all were in agreement.

Planning. Whilst we have expressed satisfaction with the recent application for like-for-like repairs to the façade of the hair-dressers at the west end of Purfleet Street and of the proposed designs for the second and third floor extensions of the former British Legion Club for residential purposes in Tower Street.

We have lodged an objection (see letter) to the proposed works at [27 King Street](#) where it is desired to change its use from unoccupied offices to residential apartment studios. In our opinion, as well as that of Heritage England and the Ancient Monuments Society, the proposed divisions of the rooms will have an adverse effect on the architectural integrity of the interior of this gracious Grade II* building. We also deplored the fact that work had begun *before* consent had been granted and strongly urged a re-design the applicant working with specialist bodies such as Heritage England. A determination on the application is awaited. We also commented on the proposed fifth floor extension of the residential block currently being erected on the old Post Office garage site on Paradise Street; our recommendation being that it be devoted to a single, spacious apartment than the proposed two, small, apartments.

Late Night Economy. You will recall that 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. Norfolk County Constabulary agreed to meet with your chairman, vice-chairman and secretary to discuss the issue; we continue to await a date for that meeting.

PSPOs. Public Spaces Protection Order Restrictions, relating to drinking in the street and in public places such as local authority parks and churchyards, have now been extended for a further three years within the entire perimeter of the Ward.

Old South Lynn Interpretation Board. The forum made a grant of £200 towards the Old South Lynn interpretation board – much in the style of that which we supported for Pilot Street. The board is to be affixed to the new wall enclosing the Greenland Fisheries. We asked for the forum's support to be included on the board and were disappointed to learn that this was not possible because of lack of space. Similar requests from other donors were rejected for the same reason. The result is that anyone reading the board will assume that the entire initiative and execution is that of the borough council.

Parking on pavements. Whilst Freebridge has said that the increased on-site parking within the footprint of the proposed Hillington Square development will remove pavement parking from Bridge Street and All Saints Street, pavement parking has recently begun on the north-west part of Stonegate Street. We wrote to Inspector Robert Button, Norfolk police. adding our support to the newly-formed Bridge Street & All Saints St. Residents Association, asking if there had been a relaxation in the rules relating to parking on pavements during COVID-19 and, if not, why these vehicles had not been served with parking tickets regarding this. Constable Lee Anderton West Norfolk Community Engagement officer responded by saying that this was only an offence if it formed an ‘obstruction’, i.e. that if the vehicles could not be ‘skirted’ by pedestrians resulting in them having to seek an alternative route by an alternative road to achieve their journey. Your vice-chairman is endeavouring to secure a traffic regulation order for this part of Stonegate Street. [Parking on Pavements](#)

Town Investment Plan. The recently-issue Town Investment Plan can be read on [230-188 Town Investment Plan Document WEBFINAL.pdf](#) There is much comment on the development of the South Quay – though no comment as to where the monies might be coming from – and on improvements to cycling and walking routes, on future industrial development as well as the proposed new ‘hub’ being created from the former Argos building in the Vancouver Quarter. Mention is also made of easing traffic control on London Road at the South Gate by diverting traffic across Southgate Park.

Forum continues to support the Thurley/Harris option regarding Southgates Park, one of ten open spaces in the PE30 postcode created under the King George V Memorial Fund. As mentioned in my Annual Report, nine of these open spaces have been registered with The Fields Association, successors to the King George V Memorial Fund and the King George V Playing Fields Association. Unfortunately, BCKLWN has not registered Southgate Park with The Fields Association, which makes one feel that it has had intentions on this park for a number of years.

We have asked for a reconsideration of the proposals for the South Gate area, emphasising the need to address the volume of traffic and to consider park and ride. ([See Southgate Gateway](#))

Dr Julian W S Litten
Chairman
December 2020