

**Crosspool Forum Open Meeting - Thursday 28th July. 2022.
St Columba's Church; 7pm**

Present: Ian Hague, (Chair); Steve Reynolds, (Vice chair); Gillian Drinkwater; John Drinkwater, (treasurer); Roger Kite; Angela Southward; Sally Turnbull, (Festival week team secretary); plus 19 Crosspool residents.

Councillors: Tim Huggan; Ruth Milsom; Minesh Parekh

Apologies: Police – their report to be on the website & in the Clarion.

Guests: Olivia Blake – MP

Tania Bustamante, new manager, SW LAC).

Ian H. welcomed everyone, introduced the top table and opened the Meeting. The Minutes of the last meeting (28th April) were agreed as a true record.

He then “with great sadness” announced the death of Faye Buxton on 2nd July. She was a lifelong resident of Crosspool (until her fairly recent retirement to Scarborough) and had been very active in our community as CDYST trustee, one of the original SW Area Panel steering committee members to get the Forum up and running (original SW meeting 28th Nov 2003), Tree Preservation Order lead, and Clarion distributor. Ian attended her funeral on behalf of the Management Committee.

The Crosspool Person of the Year received three nominations; - Steve Ellis (St Columbas vaccination hub); Gillian Drinkwater (Forum note-taker, ex-CDYST Chair & Secretary), and from the floor Charles Oscroft (Darwin Lane resident & constant litter-collector). People were asked to drop their vote in the box at the door on leaving.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 1/ Aesthete – new Mediterranean café – opened on the Cuore Siciliano site on 1st July.
 - 2/ The More Posh than Dosh clothes shop site is being developed to enlarge the Sandygate Dental Practice next door.
 - 3/ Verge ‘re-wilding’ schemes locally; some residents are eager to see this done but if the verge is on a corner site the traffic sight-lines might be obscured by letting the vegetation grow (e.g. a Manchester Rd residents’ request).
 - 4/ Watt Lane proposed VAC (vehicle activated camera) may be moved to a different designated lamppost..
 - 5/ Car boot sale – Saturday 10th.September
 - 6/ Christmas children’s’ party – Sunday 11th December, St Columba’s..
 - 7/ Hagg Copse – the Forum is looking to sow wildflowers in a wide strip on part of this site.
 - 8/ Land up for auction – Coldwell Lane/ Moorbank Ave site, The CDYST looked into putting in a bid to purchase this as it has TPOs (Tree Preservation Orders) in place and a major underground water main, so surely cannot receive planning permission for building on, but this would be too expensive for them.
 - 9/ Fenced-off ‘dog walking area’ – Rivelin Valley Road – the owner has asked for retrospective planning permission. The Forum will await information on this. (see below Councillors questions)..
 - 10/ Precinct flowering tubs & baskets – Steve R. wanted to thank the school children who planted them up, & residents on his watering team. Despite the drought conditions they are “still looking fantastic”.
 - 12/ Lydgate Green has been transformed over the past years into a beautiful garden – again, thanks to all those who help. As it is surrounded on 2 sides by an 8’ high privet hedge Ian wondered if the councillors could help with getting this cropped and topped ?.
 - 13/ St Columba’s defibrillator; (Steve R) now this is 5 years old it needs new pads & battery – there is a bit of a problem with the supply chain for these but it is alright at the moment. He thanked the local resident for his donations to cover these costs. As all defibrillators ought to be registered on ‘The Circuit’ nation-wide, we know from the register that ours has been ‘activated’ twice to date. Many groups or areas are providing these but they must be maintained properly – not a cheap job.
(He asked the councillors if all school were being provided with them – Cllr Tim Huggan said yes, but their maintenance could be a problem – in particular if an organization organizes to have one, then the organization folds.)
- Steve receives a regular newsletter from the Circuit – which reported that one defibrillators has been stolen somewhere in the country!.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Drinkwater said “for a change there is some quite good news” ! He will present final figures at the October Open Meeting/AGM as details of the Festival Week & Summer Fayre finances are still coming in, but the Forum is “doing OK”.- with a “solid surplus” to distribute to good causes. He thanked the people of Crosspool, residents & businesses, for their ongoing support – with a special thank you to Sally Turnbull & her Festival sub-committee team (and to Ian & Steve for all their hard work).

Sally stood up to mention the assorted events of the Festival this year – the well dressing, walks, street market, exhibitions, & a small scarecrow competition. She said the Festival needed more fresh team members, and Chris **Batchelor** in particular would like “ an apprentice” to help with the street market organization & running. **Ian** said it had been decided to move the Fayre to 8th July 2023– in order to give the local flowers a bit longer to produce their blossom for the well dressing ‘petalling’, as a result the well dressing would be on 30th June. **Sherryl Butcher** (design & ‘ petalling’ lead) wished to thank all those who had volunteered to help assemble the board – people from far & wide came to photograph it (& it was in the Sheffield Telegraph).

Steve Reynolds talked briefly about the Fayre – good weather, a couple of hiccups – covid struck the expected entertainments – and wished to thank all the local sponsors.

MP OLIVIA BLAKE

Ms Blake (representing Hallam Ward for only 12 weeks before the first lockdown in 2020!) gave the Forum a “massive thank you” for the invitation tonight, and said she was happy to attend these sorts of meetings and events like the Fayre. She wants to hear all the local concerns and issues, and in Parliament is on committees to do with the planet emergency, cost of living crisis, slow passport & DVLA licence renewals, and public accounts - all “to deliver what the government wants to deliver”. She has “50 open enquiries” at the moment, including the regulation of energy suppliers (- it is not good to base electricity on the cost of gas -) and is an “active member” of the All Party Parliamentary Group discussing policies and changes. There is a whole range of things for her attention – e.g. fibromyalgia and miscarriages and baby loss issues. To date there have been some successes – e.g. she helped bring in a ban on moorland burning (which had a bad impact on local air quality), and is a hen harrier champion with a “passion for nature”. Residents can sign up for an E-newsletter monthly – olivia.blake.org.uk

She took questions from the floor such as: -

Qu1/ local 51 bus problems – people waiting one & a half hours for a bus (so appointments missed). The one-wheelchair only rule is also a major problem to a few residents. It has become “dangerous to go out” as even taxis will sometimes not accept a wheelchair. The city centre has become inaccessible to some people. The brought-back freebie bus does not run to the train station.

A/ Olivia relies on public transport too (generally 52) , she agreed it was “really bad” – especially since the government removed the pandemic funding. One third of Sheffield routes are about to face cuts, and “it’s ridiculous”. The Mayor Oliver Coppard has just agreed to fund the school buses, but the issue is the bus privatisation – a franchise system needs to be put in place. Manchester has started doing this but it will take 4-5 years for this to happen. (She asked the lady with the mobility problems to get in touch with her with more details).

Qu 2/ as no company wants to run the 51 the franchise system won’t work; a turn-around in the centre is needed.

A/ Once the franchise is in place the companies will have no choice – they will run the services they are told to, all locally managed.

Qu 3/ has the Council got the power to regulate buses? A/ Not strictly speaking, no. But the franchise model will mean the companies can be forced to do so. (A bus company in Manchester took their case to court and this has just finished... Sheffield has not even started the process yet). Olivia can lobby for more devolution of power to for example the Mayor – as it his job to sort out the buses. She is not able to control the fleet of buses and some new hybrids or low-carbon vehicles we used to see have now been moved elsewhere. (Some cities never moved to the Sheffield model – e.g. Reading). Leopold Street and Surrey Street will be re-opening soon.

Q4/ What are her views on the free-for-all about school catchment areas at the moment? This causes even more congestion with pupils having to be driven to schools outside their home area.

A/ Sheffield does have quite a good rate of kids getting in to their first choice of school, but she recognizes the problem with air pollution etc. Funding is needed for more spaces at certain schools.

SW LAC (Tania Bustamante)

Tania – in post only 3 days – introduced herself. It became apparent that although the LAC scheme has been in place some months the idea of its role has not trickled down to many people, so some basic explanation was needed. There are 12 councillors spread over the LACs, and their role is to plan for local priorities as brought to them., with 4 public meetings each year. Different parts of the city have different issues of importance - & our area is Crosspool, Ecclesall, Fulwood, Dore & Totley. The three main concerns that have come out of the meetings so far are road safety, traffic & parking, & parks & open spaces. She is very willing to attend again to discuss issues of particular importance to this area. The next open meeting will be held in Oct in Dore and Totley – venue to be decided.

Qu 1/ Why do we need another layer of bureaucracy? – it is “time wasting & messing about”.
A/ Ian – this is a replacement for the old ‘Panel’s’ system from years ago. The councillors said they were “really keen & passionate” about this scheme.

Qu 2/ It can be very difficult to find the right Council officer to talk to – is she in a position to take issues to the right officer?

A/ A lot of Tania’s work is co-ordination. Minesh mentioned that each LAC has £100k p.a. to use – all decisions on use to be made locally.

Qu 3/ The Council has an office to deal with fly tipping – why has this become a LAC issue?

A/ this has not been dealt with properly in the past – better ways to manage this problem are needed (Minesh). Ruth said some “really good suggestions” had come out of the meetings to date – notice of the public meetings had been dropped through individual doors. She mentioned dog-fouling, re-wilding grass verges, community speed watch programmes, & DYLS as all issues they were looking at.

Qu 4/ After waiting for 12 weeks for renewal of a blue badge, on phoning there were no staff there. Finally he was told that with continued WFH this officer could not help any further – why are they still allowed to do this?! Got to “get on with life” – a ‘positive test’ means you just have a cold now.

A/ they have lost half the budget, and there is a lot of frustration trying to get things done.

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

Qu 1/ A newish resident wanted to ask about putting in a zebra or similar crossing outside the Claremont Hospital – as cars try to overtake stopping buses & can mow people down.

A/ Ruth said they receive “100s” of requests for similar marked crossings but there is only the money to process a few each year. The new LAC could push for a particular one in a given area. Tim said when the local VAS camera is moved to this there; it should remind drivers of their speeds & might help.

Qu 2/ Broomhill, Whitham Rd car parking slots outside the shops - reduced for the pandemic – will they be brought back?

A/ No! (although they can ask for this to be looked at again as the shops want this to happen). The whole set up is badly designed - & the Council knows the roof-top parking company has a bad reputation for over-strict enforcement of their rules.

Qu 3/ is the ticketing sent by that company actually legal?

A/ The company – similarly at the Berkeley Precinct parking area – does pressure car drivers to pay up and people need to fight back if they feel they have a valid case..

Qu 4/ If you see double yellow line, zigzag or obstruction parking in Crosspool, where do you send the photos to?

A/ The NW Police, via their website, but you must be prepared to present a statement to court if asked. The website is rather complicated – they offer 20 scenarios to choose from! – but there have been 250 successful prosecutions to date. (**Steve** will put this information on the Spar noticeboard).

Qu 5 / Former Motorworld demolition site – fenced off & derelict for years – now up for auction again. Can anything be done? Some residents actually moved away as they faced a threat of a large block of flats going up there.

A/ Planning permission lasts for 5 years (which has not yet been reached); if the land does not cause a public health nuisance there is nothing the Council can do. (A resident remarked The Plough pub site is a far worse eyesore, and up for sale).

Qu 6/ There are major niggles about Amey & the local potholes.

A/ Ruth said a meeting is being organized between Amey, herself & Minesh to get them all sorted out together.

Qu 7/ Precinct litter bins – although emptied first thing in the morning they are full again & overflowing by lunchtime (school term times). They need emptying twice a day.

A/ Photographic evidence that this is the case would be very useful - from September, obviously...

Qu 8/ Precinct disabled parking bay (outside GT News) - progress?

A/ Ruth has sent another email to remind Amey - & will continue to chase this up (as it is badly/incorrectly marked and abused).

Qu 9/ Roger Kite wondered if the Highways Authority has any control over the utility companies? There are lots of temporary traffic lights around at the moment - & for instance the water main on the Manchester Road has burst – AGAIN. (Last time he was informed by a workman it is because it is cast iron & too much heavy traffic rumbles over it – it should have been replaced when the road was resurfaced.) There is no sign of any workmen – just a bit of fencing and all this precious water running down the gutter.

A/ Yes, there is definite underinvestment in this - & they know that fixing one leak just puts pressure on another spot. There might also be a shortage of materials at the moment.

Qu 10/ Re the 'dog-walking' area opposite Holme Head Wheel Dam – the RVCG has objected to the plastic fencing as an eyesore, & as this was designated grazing land surely intending to rent out this becomes a change of use? The bank of donkey stables had permission – but there appears to be an office there now.

A/ Minesh said this is going to the next planning meeting - & the user of the 'Donkey Field' off Hagg Lane has been told to remove the development there. Tim said feedback like this to the LACs is useful – they need to know the feelings in the community. If planning permission is granted they could add all sorts of conditions to the permission. (eg looking after the wildlife on site). (Apparently 120 people have commented favourably about this scheme – but surely if dogs are properly trained and under control, fenced-off areas for letting a dog run loose should not be necessary).

Qu 11/ Clough Fields footpath/bridle path ongoing; Roger Kite wished to ensure the councillors were updated on any of the latest feedback he has had. He has sent in all requested evidence for the use of this path for generations & apparently the local horse riders & the British Horse Society have even more. A Section 14 claim has gone in to the Council & Roger will serve notice on the Clough Fields owners tomorrow. He felt this could have been sorted out earlier and more easily if the Highways Records people would admit they had made a mistake and the path has to be re-opened.

The next Open Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 27th October (St Columba's Church).