

**YORK ENVIRONMENT FORUM
MINUTES OF MEETING ON Mar.10th.2015**

Present:

Philip Crowe	York Tomorrow
Dot Lawton	Heslington PC
Cllr. Andy d'Agorne	CYC Green Group
Cllr. Dave Merrett	CYC Labour Group
Anna Bialkowska	Tang Hall Big Local
Alison Sinclair	YOPF, Cons. Area Advisory Panel
Ron Healey	CTC N. Yorks.
Penny Bainbridge	Edible York
Mick Phythian	YNET
Barry Otley	Wheatlands Community Woodland
Linda Maggs	Friends of Hagg Wood/YNET
Alastair Cooper	York Quakers Friargate
Pauline Buchanan	Yorspace
Susannah Bird	Yorspace
James Newton	Yorspace

Chair: Phil Bixby

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies; John Cossham, Adrian Lovett, Tom Waring, Ivana Jakubkova, Sara Robin, Carole Green, Hugh Cripps, Richard Lane. Welcome to Susannah Bird, James Newton, Pauline Buchanan

2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

agreed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

item 7-Terry's clock tower- AS reported on the public consultation. Concern had been expressed over the lack of community facilities. A restaurant, a heritage concept involving chocolate manufacture (possibly involving the "Cocoa House"), and a lookout point at the top with explanation of the landscape and evolution of manufacturing (the "Garland" organisation was mentioned) were ideas put forward. There was no response to date from the developers.

4 REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP and SUBSCRIPTIONS

Penny B. stated there were now 28 paid up members. Finances were satisfactory (details on request). Transfer of remaining funds from the Open Planning Forum expected shortly.

5 TRANSPORT- YEF involvement

Clr.Ad'A confirmed the CYC proposals were to establish a Congestion Commission of 4 elected members and 5 external experts. It was suggested that YEF could organise a public debate on the issue. Penny B. proposed using social media to generate interest and responses. The YEF could submit formal comments to the commission. The general view was that time should not be spent on this until after the Local Election results, as the proposed commission did not have the support of all parties at the moment, and its composition and terms of reference were not known.

6 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

BO stressed the importance of the green environment in an holistic approach to sustainable design. AC emphasised the need for higher space and sustainability standards, and for greater financial support for housing associations and other "non-commercial" providers. AS noted the danger to affordable housing supply posed by the proliferation of buy-to-let and holiday homes, and the problems in down-sizing due to lack of bridging loan finance in the market. Penny B. noted that short rental contracts meant tenants had no incentive to pay for property improvements (JN agreed); that rental properties were often substandard, particularly regarding noise transmission; that rent controls should be introduced; and that stable communities were unlikely to evolve when short-term renting persists. "People First", rather than the profit motive, should be what drives housing improvements. The consensus appeared to be that residential fully sustainable development was unlikely to be achieved under the present open market system dominated by large developers.

7 YORSPACE CO-HOUSING-Sue Bird, James Newton

SB and JN described the thinking behind the co-housing movement, which was becoming increasingly mainstream, although with few projects realised as yet. They quoted the "Lilac" ("Low Impact Living Affordable Community") project in Leeds and a project in Lancaster where slightly different financial arrangements (and pricing) had been developed.

The main points were that each participant would have ownership in the complex; that each complex would function as a community of like minded participants; each complex would contain shared communal facilities; building would be to the highest environmental and sustainability standards; and costs would be low over the medium to long term. Interestingly the "Lilac" project used a straw bale construction technique similar in principle to that used at York's Hazel Court depot.

Although financing arrangements can be complex and time-consuming, there is no doubt that this approach is a viable alternative to conventional volume housebuilding, and YORSPACE hopes to develop the concept in its proposals for Oliver House in York, at present owned by CYC.

Members felt that such an innovative development would fit in well with the social structure of the close knit Bishophill area, agreed to make representations to CYC in support of this admirable project, and thanked the speakers for their informative and stimulating presentation.

8 A.O.B.

AB reported attending a wideranging sustainability seminar and workshop, which she had introduced on behalf of the YEF, attended by c.60-70 delegates.

Cllr.Ad'A reported attending a business-focussed Economic Partnership meeting, were priorities were agreed as being tackling congestion; promoting high value employment; encouraging enterprise and entrepreneurship; and releasing commercial and residential sites for development.

Cllr.Merrett reported attending an important energy conference, noting the continued reduction in solar energy costs, and the difficulties in developing alternative energy sources in the light of changes in Govt.tax regimes.

BO was following up the issue of air pollution in relation to green infrastructure with CYC officers.

Penny B. reported an Edible York/ASDA initiative through the issue of customer preference tokens at their stores

NEXT MEETING

Date	Tues. 14th.April 2015 4.00-6.00pm.
Venue	West Offices - George Hudson room
Agenda	tbc

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