

CENTRAL NORWICH CITIZENS' FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Forum held at City Hall, Norwich on Tuesday, 5th December 2006 commencing at 7pm.

MINUTES

APOLOGIES: Par Daniel.

IN ATTENDANCE: Beryl Bottomley, Jim Durrant, Paul Eastaugh, Julian Foster (in the Chair and Minute Taker), Don Homfray, Carol Hardman, Hazel Harrison, John Mawer, Maran McKay, Barbara Searle.

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

There were none.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of the last meeting held at City Hall, Norwich on Tuesday 7th November 2006 were taken as read. **RESOLVED** that they were a correct record and should be signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Unitary Status for Norwich

The results of the Ipsos MORI Survey and the Executive Summary of the Local Government White Paper were considered. The Chairman reported that the Chief Executive Officer of Norwich City Council had offered to speak to the Forum but that she could not be regarded as an unbiased speaker and her offer was refused. **RESOLVED** that, nonetheless, providing a truly independent and unbiased speaker could be found, it was still worth raising the subject again for later discussion.

3.2 Safer Norwich Partnership

The Chairman reminded the Forum that, at its last meeting, it had been suggested that too much time had been devoted to matters to do with the reduction of crime and disorder and that it was time other subjects were addressed. He pointed out that, in the recent past, there had been heavy emphasis on crime and disorder due to his own involvement and participation in the Norwich City Centre Licensing Forum, the Safer Norwich Partnership and the City Centre Management Partnership on the last of which he headed up the workstream on Safety which the partnership regarded as its highest priority. He pointed out that, if other aspects were to be regarded as sufficiently important for work to be undertaken, whilst it was quite possible to do so, it would be necessary for members proposing such work to take a lead in promoting it/them. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Traffic and Transport Committee should be asked to undertake some work into examining the traffic and transport problems existing in the city (particularly relating to the improvement of public transport) and seek to suggest solutions. Paul Eastaugh proposed that he might look again at the list of projects suggested in the 'Whither the Forum?' debate and try to suggest ways in which some of them might be developed in the future. It was **AGREED** that the Chairman should provide him with the list, prioritised by Ann Rostron, to see if he could make headway with it.

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3.3 Planning Committee

The Chairman pointed out that, at its last meeting, Jim Durrant had outlined the re-think by the Planning Committee on 26th October 2006 of their response to Application No 06/00724/F Site between Barrack Street and the River but, at that time, the Committee's recommendations had not been circulated. They had now been circulated and were **RECEIVED**.

4. REPORTS.

4.1 A Website for the Forum

The Chairman reported that he had asked the Norwich City Centre Licensing Forum to provide a website to enable members who were not able to attend meetings to keep in touch with what was going on and that one had been created by the Web Master at Lava & Ignite nightclub. It now, therefore, seemed appropriate for the Forum also to have its own website and for it to provide links to those of other partners. He had, therefore, asked Paul Eastaugh to create one. Paul Eastaugh explained he had established a domain for the Forum and was in process of creating a website on which might be provided all Forum agendas and minutes together with other useful information and with links to other partners' sites and facilities to enable members to log on and register. It was agreed that, at least in the first place, he and the Chairman should closely monitor all items published on the site to ensure they were not detrimental to the Forum's aims, aspirations and reputation. He report was **RECEIVED**.

4.2 A New Partnership

The Chairman reported that he had opened discussions with Charles Clarke MP, chief officers of the City Council and Chief Inspector Gavin Tempest with a view to establishing a new partnership arrangement which would allow for a series of meetings of residents to be held in order that they might raise items of interest, concern and complaint which might be discussed and, if appropriate, resolved or referred to the appropriate body to be resolved and that a report would be provided soon after each meeting setting out what matters had been raised, what actions had been taken and what was proposed if resolution had not been immediately possible. Maran McKay raised a number of queries and alternative proposals based on her experience of being involved in similar Ward meetings with Charles Clarke, the City Council and the Police. The discussion ranged widely and Maran McKay said that it was difficult to focus peoples' concerns on to realistic issues that might be capable of resolution and that it might be preferable to ask a representative of the Directorate of Democratic Services to be present who could convey peoples' concerns to those who could resolve them whilst the Chairman believed that the Director of Regeneration and Development was better placed to provide immediate answers and action. Beryl Bottomley pointed out that the discussion had strayed far beyond the limits that the agenda item encompassed and suggested that such disagreements and divergences from the agenda were possibly the reason why it was difficult to persuade residents to attend Forum meetings.

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It was generally felt that there would be benefits to be achieved by what was proposed, particularly in relation to the opportunities it would provide to reach and attract new members and involve them in the Forum's work. In conjunction with the new website this would mean a strengthening of the Forum's influence and its ability to be seen to be addressing the real issues voiced by a far wider number of residents than had been possible up to now. **RESOLVED** that the Chairman should be encouraged to proceed with the proposal with a view to arranging a first residents' meeting in February 2007.

4.3 Norwich City Centre Licensing Forum

The minutes of the meetings held on 10th October, 1st November and 7th November 2006 were **RECEIVED**.

4.4 Licensing Committee

Carol Hardman sought to alter the minutes of the last meeting to make it clear that the City Council's current application for variation in respect of St Andrew's Hall was not a Temporary Event Notice but a special variation application. The Chairman pointed out that the minutes had already been approved as correct and could not be altered and that, since the outcome would be the same, the error was irrelevant. He also pointed out that the principle involved had been discussed by the full Forum at its last meeting and it had been agreed that, in special circumstances and if a greater good might be better served, the Licensing Committee should feel free to find in favour of such applications. In this case the Committee had felt that, while it was known that certainly two people (and possibly a few more) had objected to noise emanating from St Andrew's Hall, an overwhelming majority of city centre residents would want exceptions to be made in respect of the Norwich Festival and the special concert, the subject of the second application. Therefore the Licensing Committee had recommended acceptance of the applications which would allow the noise limiter to be switched off during these events. The minutes were **RECEIVED**.

4.5 City Centre Management Partnership

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2006 were **RECEIVED**.

4.6 Press Cuttings

The press cuttings since the last meeting were **RECEIVED**.

5. LIAISON WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

5.1 With the City Council

There being no City Council representative present, there was no report.

5.2 With the County Council

Maran McKay reported on the discussion proceeding within the County Council with a view to possibly re-siting the central fire station at Trowse and offered to invite the Chief Fire Officer to make a presentation to the Forum.

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The Chairman pointed out that, on the last occasion when the County Council had proposed moving the central fire station, the Forum had been concerned to hear the opposing views of the Fire Brigades Union but that, in the event, the proposals had been dropped and it would probably be inappropriate to invite the Chief Fire Officer to make a presentation. Maran McKay's report was **RECEIVED**.

6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that, because the next scheduled meeting would normally be on 2nd January 2007 and its proximity to the New Year celebrations, it would be advisable for it to be deferred to Tuesday, 6th February 2007.