



## **APRIL 2013 CHAIR'S REPORT**

### **1. ONE NORBITON UPDATE**

As reported last month, the pilot for this project ended at the end of this financial year. Reports have been completed and submitted by both the 'Professionals' and the 'Community Working Group'. These are attached as appendices one and two. The future for this project looks pretty exciting given the positive feedback received from the Local Government Information Unit [LGIU] in the end of pilot report. As you will see in the reports there are three key aims for the coming months. The first is to move into the old Laundry premises on Cambridge Garden - (this move will include CREst and possibly other local groups and it is hoped that a 'Community Hub' will grow organically) Second is the already agreed plan to create a Task Force which will combine efforts to help workless individuals back in to work whilst also encouraging them to volunteer for part of the time. The added benefit of this will be improvements to the Norbiton Environment as Not in Education, Employment or Training [NEETs] and others are trained in areas such as fence repairs. Finally the plan to introduce Community Wardens to the Norbiton area has moved forward with ON representatives having visited both Hammersmith and Fulham and Hounslow to find how they run similar schemes. The One Norbiton website address is: [www.onenorbiton.org.uk](http://www.onenorbiton.org.uk)

### **2. ESTATE MATTERS**

Work has continued with the renovating of flower beds on both estates. This has inevitably suffered some delays due to the extended winter weather.

There is a growing need for comprehensive estate inspections to be planned and a proper repairs record drawn up to keep better track of the requests for repairs or other action and the dates when the reports are submitted alongside when the actions are completed. Lighting and fencing over on Cambridge Gardens continues to be a problem despite many reminders. There has also been complaints made about the increase in both rubbish and household goods left on balconies and landings. We fully appreciate that the caretakers are doing their best but they are not helped when debris from contractors is left behind, nor by the fact that there are a number of residents who openly and repeatedly abuse the system and get away with it.

### **3. CRE PLAY-SCHEME**

The official launch of the Play and Recreation Scheme took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> April in Piper Hall and was fairly successful, despite the arctic conditions! There are still a few tasks to be completed before the project is deemed 'finished' such as wheelchair access and raised beds in the Fordham area. We are awaiting quotes for this. Meanwhile, Simon Oelman attended the last CREPs meeting where we discussed future maintenance of the equipment and alterations to the existing Terms of Reference to take in to account the fact that the working party will be maintaining the equipment rather than working to have it installed.

### **4. FUN DAY 2013**

We are planning to hold a meeting to start work on the Fun Day on 10<sup>th</sup> April from 10.30 am - noon in Queen Mary's Hall. This will be during the day time where the basic event outline and budgets

will be agreed which will start the ball rolling in terms of booking attractions, sending out booking forms etc. After this we plan to arrange an evening meeting where all those interested in helping with this year's event can come together and agree who will take responsibility for what. As you know, we intend to shift the focus a little this year to make the event feel more like a village fete - more sideshows and stalls such as 'Guess the weight of the cake', skittles for example

Meanwhile we are beginning the never ending quest for prizes for both the raffle and tombola so if you know of likely sources please let us know.

## **5 .FOOD HYGIENE TRAINING**

It has been agreed that CREst will join forces with One Norbiton and RBK and organise a joint training session. Sandra Johnson has been a real help with this but on Monday evening we need to agree when we actually do the training - eg: Weekend, daytime, evening?

## **6. DUKES TAVERN PLANNING APPLICATION**

This has been a joint project involving CREst, One Norbiton and CRERA. All three groups have worked together to gather the views of locals via the One Norbiton website, sign a petition to protest against the revised application ( which would result in a 7 storey building being erected) or encouraging residents to write to register objections. The deadline for this was put back a few days but I hope to gather any remaining petitions at Monday's meeting. The next stage will be the meeting at Guildhall which the public are allowed to attend. It has been good to experience all of the local groups coming together for a common aim.

## **7. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

- a) **Drama Group** - This has gone from strength to strength - Jenny has kindly written a report which I have included with this.
- b) **Pride of Place** - Held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, this was a huge success where everyone who attended enjoyed it so much there are calls for similar events to be arranged for the future - possibly with additional attractions such as food from a favoured era, the inclusion of school children in the event and perhaps even working in partnership with Kingston Library and Museum.
- c) **Family Learning Taster Sessions\*** - Veronica is still very keen to hear from residents about the kind of activities they would like to see in Piper Hall. At the moment we have had suggestions for a tea -dance, bingo and further Pride of Place events

## **8. AGM/ ANNUAL REPORT**

Just a quick reminder that our next meeting will be the AGM. Any items for inclusion in the Annual report would be welcome.

## Drama Group Report

The drama group is taught by 3 Kingston University students, and monitored by their course tutor, Jim Reynolds. This community project is part of the students' degree and they will be marked on it.

Following on from the drama group held last year at the Rose Theatre, this year the drama group is held at Queen Mary's Hall, Cambridge Gardens. It was hoped that the locality would encourage more young people from the estate and surrounding areas to attend, and this has certainly worked as well as the offer of free pizza and salad. Factors such as easy parking, a good timeslot (4.30pm-6.30pm), and that many of the children can walk home has meant we are full up now with 21 children. We charge £2 per child (£1 per sibling) (great value seeing as they are getting 90 minutes of drama plus a free meal).

We have run 4 sessions so far. The students have 7 weeks to put together a performance, which will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> April.

To date (4 weeks of drama) CReSt has spent £212.81 on pizza (delivery from Pizza Box), and the drama group takings have totalled £119.50, which means CReSt has subsidised the group with £93.31.

### Future plans

#### **Students & Objectives**

The current students are possibly going to carry on teaching the group up until the schools break up for summer in July. I am due to meet with the students on 8<sup>th</sup> April to discuss their plans for the drama group further. Jim Reynolds, their tutor is happy for them to carry on, and we are both agreed that it would need to stop for the summer holidays and restart in September when the schools return. After the performance in April, he thinks they could then aim to produce work that relates to things happening around Kingston, like the Carnival for example.

Jim has suggested that the drama group puts on a pantomime at Christmas and this would be the goal for the autumn term. If our current students are unable to carry on in the autumn, Jim will encourage another group of students to take up the reigns. All the students have community experience and hold CRB checks.

With these objectives in place, it would hopefully be a smooth handover to new students to carry on with the group.

The pitfalls are that a fresh round of students may not want to commit to this project during an autumn term (as it wouldn't count towards their studies and they would be volunteering purely for experience with children), and the children would have to get used to a new set of students. Jim cannot always guarantee that we will have the students all the time, but will try his best to keep them on board to keep the drama group going.

#### **Running costs/subsidy**

The 'free pizza' was a tool to encourage the children to sign up, but at a cost of £93 a month to subsidise it's an outgoing that perhaps could be better spent.

The drama group takes on average £35 a week. This money could be spent on snacks and refreshments (although it won't stretch to pizza). The current pizza subsidy might be better spent on props, costumes, set design, curtains, lighting etc and be more of an investment in the long term value of the drama group? I know there is a lockable room at the back of the stage – I could investigate further to see if this could be used as a secure storeroom.

I'm not sure of the hall bookings cost and policy for Queen Mary's Hall. I would need to look into this further and block book the hall up until July. Seven of the children attending live on the estates, the others live in nearby roads in Norbiton, including the King Henry's estate.

### **Staffing**

From my recent experience, the group will always need someone to run it each session in terms of organising the register, food, money, correspondence with parents & students, risk assessment checks, first aid and liaison with the RBK contact centre. I'm happy to continue in this role for the foreseeable future, but would welcome any other volunteers!

### **Future attendance**

Obviously as the 11 year olds start secondary school in September, they might not be able to continue coming, so in which case a fresh round of flyers will be needed to encourage new children to attend. I will put the drama group's details on the Families Information Service website too.

I think keeping the costs very low at £2 per child will help, as other drama groups charge around £7/8 per session. It proves to be very good value, especially as we provide food which no other group does.

### **A new name?**

Jim came up with a great idea, along the lines of Cambridge Road Estate Youth Performance Theatre (CRYPT), but I guess we should talk to the kids and students for their thoughts.

Hopefully this drama group will grow and run year round rather than just in the Spring Term to coincide with the students' project. However with changing students and children coming and going, it might be difficult to sustain enthusiasm and attendance. When I chatted to mums at the King Athelstan school, they were very keen for their children to attend a local drama group, and some mums asked if we could accommodate 6 and 7 year olds in the future, so there is a demand for it. However, the most successful age so far has appeared to be the 9-11 year olds.

*Jenny Pitt*



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Darren Richards  
Head of Planning and Transport  
Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames  
Guildhall II  
Kingston, Surrey

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2013

Reference number: 13/12181

Dear Mr Richards

Re: Planning application for Dukes Tavern Site – 64-80 Cambridge Road

I am writing on behalf of the Cambridge Road Estates Community Group [CREst] – a charity based on the Cambridge Road Estates.

A number of local residents have learned of the above application which asks to revise the original application [12/12545/FUL] from a planned building to accommodate 100 students on the 80 Cambridge Road site. The recently submitted application seeks to demolish an existing building in order to re-develop the site and construct a 7 storey high building with plans to provide 300 student rooms and a retail unit.

Many residents will be submitting their objections individually but I am writing on behalf of CREst to object to the latest application on the following grounds:

1. The height of the proposed building is far higher than any neighbouring building and will seriously impinge on the eye-line view of local residents. When the Cambridge Road Estate was designed, care was taken to create an estate which does not feel 'closed in', despite the density of the population. A construction of this kind will undermine these previous attempts to afford residents an open environment where possible – in particular those in neighbouring accommodation whose outlook will be seriously restricted. This, in turn could be to the detriment to the health and well-being of those affected.
2. Whilst the application states that the accommodation will be 'non parking', there is no guarantee that this can be effectively enforced. Indeed, the recent change in the law which prevents the clamping of unauthorised vehicles only exacerbates a problem which already exists. The location of this site is only minutes from Kingston Town Centre and a local rail link which makes it very attractive to those seeking a free parking space. The introduction of 300 extra vehicle owners would seriously affect the availability of parking spaces for estate residents and thus affect their quality of life.

3. The introduction of an accommodation block of this size will increase the burden of an already very busy public highway. In addition there is a good chance that vehicles will take advantage of the 'back roads' to reduce traffic congestion and substantially increase the volume of traffic on both of the Cambridge Road Estates. This could increase the possibility of accidents to the many young people who live and play on the estates. Indeed, the main green space on CRE is next to the proposed build.
4. Thanks to the afore mentioned access to Kingston and rail links there is already problems with drivers who make use of the local back streets and create a 'rat run'. This will only increase the problem.
5. Finally, although this will not directly affect the committee decision, we believe that consideration should be given to the social impact of this proposal. There are genuine fears that the level of anti-social behaviour will raise from what is already an uncomfortably high level. Further, this is already a very densely populated area and we wonder just how many extra people we can comfortably absorb in to this community – especially as by the very nature of the accommodation on offer, the inhabitants will be transient and perhaps not too worried about the impression they make on neighbours.

We understand that there is very little hope of reversing the original planning decision for 100 students. However, we aim to work hard to ensure that the current plans are rejected in favour of the original project. This, at least will restrict the level of disruption to long term local residents.

Yours sincerely

Jill Preston  
Chair