

# **Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Wednesday, 23 April 2008**

**Held at: Eyres Monsell Community Centre, Hilsbrough Road**

Who was there:

Councillor Kim Blower
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Councillor Rory Palmer
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## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Palmer was the Chair for the meeting.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors had no interests to declare.

## **3. PRESENTATION ON THE NEW COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

Councillor Palmer gave a presentation explaining the new Community Meetings. He explained the following points:

- They had been set up to involve local people in decisions and to take action on the things that were important to residents.
- Unlike the former Area Committees, the meetings would be specific to Eyres Monsell.
- The meetings could build on good work being done by groups and organisations in the ward
- Services would be able to improve with input from the community as long as everyone worked together.
- Both he and Councillor Blower were committed to working hard to make things better.
- The ward would have £10,000 to spend on things the meeting felt were a priority and for community initiatives. He stressed that this was not the only money being spent on Eyres Monsell, as much more came into the area through Council and other services.
- The meetings would come up with a “Ward Action Plan” which would concentrate on things that local residents thought were most important.
- There would be a meeting at least four times a year, and that there could also be other activities outside the meetings such as patch walks.
- The meetings would be in two parts – an informal part with information stalls and representatives from various services or organisations, and a more formal part which would deal with an action plan for the ward, petitions and budget allocation.

Councillor Palmer then introduced the first phase of preparing the Ward Action Plan, asking people to discuss in groups what their main concerns were and what positive changes people would like to see, plus to think about ideas on how to make these things possible.

The meeting split into groups for people to fill in their concerns on cards for consideration at the next meeting.

#### 4. THE EXCHANGE

Ann Branson, Service Director, Housing Renewal, Options and Development, gave a presentation that introduced a public consultation on the future of the Exchange, called "All Change at the Exchange?" that would run until 13 June 2008. She introduced her colleagues, Ian Stapleton, Neighbourhood Housing Manager, Julia Keeling, Head of Housing Development and Paul Griffiths, Development Officer, all of whom would be working on the project.

Ann stated that the Exchange had at one time been a very nice place in the community, but now may not be as appropriate for the estate. She noted that there were a good number of local shops and aspects of it that people would not want to lose. She explained that it covered a sizeable plot of land, and any future changes could also take in the site of the Invincible pub. There were two options:

- 1) Keep The Exchange as it is and continue to maintain it.
- 2) Redevelop it, which would involve a lot of debate and consultation to make sure it is right for the area.

Ann said that if it was to be redeveloped, a lot of money would be involved and the Council would have to work with other organisations, including the shops, owners of the Invincible and housing associations which would likely provide replacement homes.

She gave out a questionnaire and asked people to fill it in. She promised that people would be listened to and they would be kept informed.

Members of the public raised the following questions and comments and these were discussed:

- 1) *Would this be different to the work on Cavendish Road flats? The developer made promises to provide shops, but these are no longer there.*  
Officers said the end shop was advertised, but no-one took it, so it became housing. During this redevelopment there was a period without shops, but any work on the exchange would have to include plans so that existing shops could carry on their businesses by moving straight into new premises.
- 2) *Would there still be a housing office?*  
Officers said yes there would, but officers didn't know exactly where until plans were more detailed. Councillor Palmer said that this could be put on a list of essential things to take into account. He said that during discussions he had been involved in, he and Councillor Blower had insisted on keeping a housing office and continuity of trade for the shops.
- 3) *We need assurance that the Council will not only listen but engage with us.*  
Ann and Councillor Palmer both gave this assurance, as this was the biggest thing to happen to Eyres Monsell in 50 years.
- 4) *We've been to meetings like this before and the same things are mentioned, but nothing changes. £10,000 is a very small amount for the estate.*  
Councillor Palmer said that £10,000 was only a small fraction of the money spent on Eyres Monsell, this was just a pot of money over which the community could have total control. He said that things hadn't happened in

the past, but that more progress had been made in the last three months than in the last three years.

5) *What about facilities for young people?*

Ann said that these could be put on the list of things to include in the plan.

6) *We love the concept, but before spending such money on The Exchange, why isn't the estate being sorted out?*

Ann said that this was only one of several projects on the estate. Also, other issues could be picked up from the ward priority cards people had filled in. The whole process could take at least 18 months before work actually started, so there was a lot of time to try to sort out things on the estate.

7) *Will everything else be hindered by this plan?*

Ann said that this wouldn't happen as they had extra staff to deal with it. Councillor Palmer said that this was a chance for something big to happen and would show that second best was no longer good enough for Eyres Monsell.

8) *Not everyone wants to lose the Exchange. It is a meeting place for people. It just needs improving.*

Councillor Palmer said that all opinions should be put on the questionnaire, so that officers could see what was the most popular view.

9) *Will people living above the shops be given first priority for housing when they have to move? We welcome the development.*

Ann said that if the Council had decided to go ahead, tenants would get priority but not before a decision was made. There would also be a compensation package which would include assistance with moving.

Councillor palmer encouraged people to fill in the questionnaires and thanked Ann and her colleagues for the presentation. He said that this would be discussed at future Community Meetings.

## **5. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting was to be held on Wednesday 11 June 2008 at 6.00pm in Eyres Monsell Community Centre.

*(Please note – following the meeting this date had to be changed to Thursday 3 July 2008)*

## **6. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The formal part of the meeting closed at 7.10pm and people were encouraged to have a look at the information stands and talk with officers.

