

# Notes from Hyde Park Forum Meeting, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016, 7pm, Cardigan Centre

**1. Attendance Present:** Rev Heston Groenewald, Wendy Cook, Bill McKinnon, Anup Sharma (LCC), Sue Buckle, Wain Beckford, Dawn Carey Jones, Leigh Greenwood, Lassaad Laouini, Howard Eaglestone, Andy Sloss, Ying Ho, Sheraz Hussain, Simon Hall, Mick Jolley. **Apologies:** Dmitrijs Oginskis, Barbara Mitchell, Leeds Federated Housing, Pravin Dayalji, Mark Stanton, Pav Akhtar.

## 2. Minutes and Matters Arising

**Minutes from 8<sup>th</sup> Oct and 16<sup>th</sup> Nov meetings** were approved.

**Matters Arising:** In relation to empty houses Anup let us know there are currently 449 empty properties (some empty for a very short time) in the Hyde Park Area. This is a snapshot in time but can be "date stamped." Thank you to Anup for researching the empty property situation for us.

## 3. AGM Report

A short film including photos from the AGM and audio of people saying what they loved about Hyde Park was shown. Anup asked Dawn to send him the film so that it could possibly be shared with other groups. The AGM involved: People sharing their favourite places and memories of Hyde Park; formalisation of the committee; a summary of what the Forum had achieved over the past year; and two policy intention discussion groups. Following disclosure at the AGM that the location of the police station is unsatisfactory, at this meeting there was a suggestion that the old post office and sorting office at Hyde Park Corner would be a suitable location.

## 4. Policy Group Reports

**a) Housing Group:** The group has started to look at issues based on consultation responses, conversations with residents and walks around the area. The issue of empty properties has come up a lot. The Forum commissioned a housing study as part of a technical support package offered by the government. We asked for the study to focus on empty properties in our Area but because the company carrying out the study has a restrictive contract with the government, the report was formulaic and did not look closely at the empty property situation. However, some of the report's findings will still be useful to us. Using the Strategic Housing Market Assessment formula, the report suggested we need 125-150 new houses between 2011 and 2028 (Core Strategy period). Taking into account current planning permissions (for 96 units) the Area will only need another 30-50 units. This can be used to our advantage if the community does not find a proposed large development appropriate for our Area.

There was discussion about the logic of proposing new house building in our Area when we have empty houses. Anup's snapshot of data shows that 60% of houses have been empty less than 6 months, but 40% have been empty longer. We could argue that if we have a record of being able to bring empty properties back to use, we should not have to entertain any proposed large housing development unless we think it will help rebalance the Area.

There was discussion about likelihood of being able to refurbish existing properties; about whether LCC would Compulsorily Purchase empty properties in situations like 17-19 Brudenell Rd which has been empty for around 10 years and about LCC listening to Forum and responding to

the Area's needs. Anup agreed to look into history and current situation at 17-19 Brudenell Road.

Anup to look into whether some landlords would rather leave houses empty than have families living there.

Anup to look into whether landlords are aware that they can allow their houses to go back to C3 without losing their HMO licence.

Anup agreed to locate where the empty properties are geographically (subject to data protection).

There was discussion about intention to try to broaden demographic when we may not have infrastructure to support it e.g. not enough school space provision so families will go to other areas. Anup agreed to talk to children's services about not having enough school spaces.

There was discussion about how SHMA ties in with greenspace shortage and that a lot of calculations are done over a large area. Anup agreed to look into this.

**b) Open / Green Space Group:** Previously we had the Unitary Development Plan which referred to sites and greenspaces that were protected. But the Site Allocation Plans, which the Core Strategy refers to, divide greenspaces into categories. The Core Strategy says greenspace is only protected if there is a shortage of greenspace in that category. If a surplus is established in a category there is nothing to stop LCC giving permission to build on parts of it. It may be that LCC has been working to establish that HP&W ward has a surplus of greenspace in as many categories as possible. The Forum submitted its response to the SAP consultation in order to try to protect all our greenspace.

There was discussion about whether, if the SAP inspector agrees with the Forum's requests to have certain greenspaces re-categorised, whether this will actually happen. We think it will but the process is long and there were thousands of consultation submissions and the inspector will not be able to listen to everyone who requested to be able to speak to him/her. It was pointed out that the Neighbourhood Plan will be a Local Development Framework document and that it will have weight. In this document we can allocate space the way we think it should be allocated.

The group has looked at possible ways to protect our greenspace, through both projects and policies, including raising the profile of Woodhouse Moor and its history. The history is partly written and guided tours in conjunction with someone from Leeds Central Library are hopefully going to be starting soon. The group is also looking at linking our greenspaces together as a "green corridor."

**c) Clean-Up Hyde Park:** All the bin stickers have been put on bins. The group is hoping to have another clean-up day soon.

**d) Arts and Culture Group:** The group has written to the 2023 Capital of Culture steering group and also started to develop a survey and carry out an audit of artists working in our Area. The group has identified a need to separate the things it is doing, the things it needs to do and the things that need to be part of a longer term plan. In terms of what to include in the Neighbourhood Plan document, culture is a very significant part of the Forum's Area. We have alternative culture, alternative politics and a Hyde Park "way of being". Anup agreed to look for examples of how to celebrate this in a planning document. There was discussion about whether places like Camden, that have a similar sort of feel, evolved through council direction or through the direction of individuals. The meeting thought Camden had evolved organically, like Hyde Park, and wondered at what

point did the council stop resisting and start embracing. Anup agreed to look into Camden.

## 5. Chestnut Ave Planning Application

The history of the sports site was summarised, including the community taking deputations to LCC as soon as the site was fenced off; the application for 25 houses and a supermarket; the setting up of Hyde Park Olympic Legacy and the community sports business plan it produced; the planning app for 25 houses and a supermarket being refused but then approved following unpublished legal advice LCC took; and the most recent application for 262-bed student accommodation which was refused on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015. The meeting agreed to send a letter thanking the officer who wrote the exceptionally accurate and detailed report refusing the latest application.

There was discussion about whether the housing sub-group was going to do follow-up work with the Chestnut Ave site and whether asking a company to look at building a leisure facility on the site for profit would be supported at any level. The meeting thought councillors might support this seeing as the site's use as a sports facility is established. Also, if the balance of housing need is less than 50 properties, we should not need housing on this site.

## 6. Neighbourhood Plan Progress Report

A project plan was put forward last spring. We have more or less done what we set out to do regarding consultation. The first part of the consultation is complete but conversations with local residents continue. Between September and December last year the plan was to put policy intentions together. This did not happen because the Site Allocation Plan response took a long time. However, through this, the Forum has more or less done the assessments into retail, greenspace, housing and employment sites. The next 2 or 3 months will be spent talking about policy intentions in each group and circulating them. Anup asked the Forum to consult LCC when intentions are drafted, so that LCC can help.

## 7. Woodhouse Moor Area Boundary

The meeting was reminded that some of us would remember the problem with the boundary that arose a couple of years ago. For those who did not, there was a re-cap of what led to the northernmost part of Woodhouse Moor (Little Moor) being included in the Headingley Neighbourhood Area, separated from the rest of the Moor which is in our Area. Friends of Woodhouse Moor had repeatedly said that as long as the Moor was kept together, it did not matter which Area it was included in. The draft Headingley Neighbourhood Plan has focused entirely on demographic imbalance and contains no greenspace policies. There was a knowledge gap at this meeting about the processes surrounding boundary designations and re-designations. There was discussion about asking for a meeting with LCC about this but concern that this might not achieve anything, following a meeting that took place in October. This meeting voted not to give up on trying to keep the Moor intact.

## 8. Web Site and Social Media

Concern had been expressed about wording on our web site about council departments. The meeting agreed that once written, the letter thanking the council officer for his report recommending refusal of the Chestnut Ave planning application, would be published on the web site as an open letter. There was a general request for all of us to connect up as much as possible on social media. Sue is going to pass some photographs of our Area to Andy to go on the web site.

If anyone wants to contribute content to the web site please contact Andy.

## 9. Bank Account and Insurance

Dawn agreed to research this.

## 10. Info / Any Other Business

Leeds Grand Mosque has been open since 1992 for Hyde Park and surrounding areas, running youth and educational activities. Since October there has been a new committee. People are welcome to drop in any time. The mosque is trying to expand its community work.

The Forum has supported the Little Woodhouse Forum designation application

The Forum has funding to employ Ying to the end of the financial year and hopes we can get funding to continue. Ying has been doing far more than she is getting paid for and the Forum wishes to thank Ying for all she has been doing.

There have been funding cuts and redundancies at Leeds Federated. They want to be kept up to date with what the Forum is doing but are unlikely to be able to attend meetings. The meeting wishes to thank Leeds Fed for their support and wish their staff all the best.

There is a Neighbourhood Planning workshop at Old Broadcasting House on Sat 30<sup>th</sup> January, 10am to 1pm which can be booked online. There will be an inner city workshop group at this one.

Ian Mackay and Anup would like to meet with Heston, Dawn and Ying. Anup will arrange this.

## 11. Dates of Next Meetings

Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Feb, Thu 7<sup>th</sup> Apr, Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> May, Tue 5<sup>th</sup> Jul.

## Things To Do

Anup	Send further info about vacant properties in Hyde Park, including location, to Ying
Anup	Look into history and current situation of 17-19 Brudenell Road
Anup	Talk to Children's Services re provision of school places in Hyde Park
Anup	See if there is evidence that landlords are leaving properties empty rather than letting to families
Anup	See if there is evidence that landlords know they can allow their properties to go back to C3 without losing HMO licence
Anup	Look into how other authorities have included cultural based policies in their plans
Anup	Discuss Camden's example with a colleague
Anup	Look into how housing and greenspace figures interact
Anup	Arrange meeting between Ian, Anup, Heston, Dawn & Ying
Anup	Send Dawn details of Chestnut Ave Report author
Sue	Pass photos of Area to Andy
All	Contribute web site content
All	Link up on social media (if on it!)
Dawn	Research banks accounts
Dawn	Research insurance
Dawn	Send AGM film to Anup