

JRA AGM

Minutes of the meeting held on:

Wednesday 6th September, 2017 at:

Newcastle Cricket Club

1. Apologies for absence
 - From all six Jesmond Councillors who are at a council meeting
 - David Hardman, Andrew Agate, Ron Armstrong, Paul Easton, David Etchells
2. Minutes and matters arising
 - Farewell to Ron Armstrong – he's kept linkmail going but will be stopping that. Thanks again to Ron for that.
 - Amendment to constitution passed regarding expulsion from the committee. Thanks to Crispin Welby for proposing that.
 - No other matters arising.
3. Mark Lintern (Director of Employability and Student Success) and Ronnie Read (President of Students' Union) from Newcastle university presented the university's action plan
 - Mark Lintern. Working group set up to consider student impact on local communities. First action was to attend the Jesmond discussion meeting last January. Took feedback to the working group for consideration. Outcomes of that distributed on paper to the meeting. Key strands: communication to students about their impact on the local community; information for residents so they know who to talk to and the outcomes of actions as a response to issues raised (leaflet created and copies distributed); community involvement of students in the local community; Leave Newcastle Happy (campaign to prevent litter and waste on departure).
 - Ronnie Read, President of the Students Union. Three aspects: what students do, what can be done further, opening up the discourse between residents and students
 - General consensus that LNH has been successful
 - Halls to Houses campaign to address issues for students moving into houses
 - Belief that students are not malicious. Providing information to students about how residents perceive the impact of their actions.
 - Looking forward to consider actions that other universities have done regarding, for example, rubbish and bins
 - TW – thanks to ML and RR. Stressing that students are a valuable part of our community. Schemes around bins would be much appreciated.
 - Questions:
 - Are the new build halls designed to encourage students to move into? Answer is probably not, Jesmond is very popular place to live.
 - How many students were suspended last? Two, one of whom has failed his degree. Many hundreds have been fined.
 - Suggestion about employing an outreach officer was made, has that been discussed? Haven't got specific staff who patrol Jesmond. There are staff who go round occasionally. Staff in accommodation service who go out to particular streets. Persistent complaints about particular houses or streets are followed up. Council are looking at rollout plans for bigger bins for student houses.
 - Communal bins trial in one back lane was a disaster so please don't think bigger bins are a solution. But this is a council issue not for university.
 - All-night party at the end of last term – does the university discipline policy invite students to deny they were at a particular house during a party? Tenancy agreement puts responsibility on the tenant. University investigates every complaint to establish responsibility.
 - Fern Avenue Group put out a leaflet, could the student liaison officer be published? Yes, that can go on the website.

- A leaflet or postcard won't have an impact on immediate student behaviour. University is trying to work with students to get them to change their behaviour.
 - University and council need to discuss different expectations and experiences around what to do with bins. Also landlords need to take responsibility. University should be leading on discussions with landlords. University is working with landlords to provide student feedback on landlord behaviour which they hope will help improve landlord behaviour.
 - What is Northumbria doing? What's your liaison with them. Proportions of students are 6000 (Newcastle) to 1000 (Northumbria) in terms of the two university populations. There are conversations happening between the two universities to ensure there is a conference. The website has details of who to contact at each university.
 - Operation Oak can it change its tack to address transient noise on the relevant nights, Friday and Saturday are not the key nights. This will be taken back to the working group and should be taken to the council as well.
 - How much involvement does the University Registrar have in these plans? It seems that the Registrar is not interested. ML is surprised to hear this, Registrar gets frustrated and is fully behind the campaigns.
 - The sanction imposed on the university rugby club was serious. Clear precedent can be set that that kind of behaviour has serious consequences. University can fine but cannot enforce any form of community service. Fines range from £30 to £300. The money raised is hypothecated into community activities.
 - The community needs to see preventative measure as well as reactive.
 - Initiation ceremonies had been banned but they are still happening. If they happen there are consequences. The SU does treat this with utmost seriousness and is having lots of conversations about this and relevant people are briefed extensively.
 - Does Newcastle pass on complaints to Northumbria if the students are not Newcastle students? It's not an effective situation at the moment and ML will take this back to the working group.
 - Could students be encouraged to apologise for poor behaviour? Yes, it's what they are trying to encourage. Also, first contact should be a hello rather than a complaint or apology.
 - Thanks to both ML and RR – please give suggestions for actions. Use the email address or telephone number on the information sheets (casework@ncl.ac.uk 0191-208-5293).
4. Thanking committee members. Especially Ron Armstrong who has finally decided to end his involvement. Thanks also to Nils for his brilliant work on planning. Thanks also to Tony for his work as Chair. Three members are leaving: Sarah Breakey, Ian Nelson, Crispin Welby.
5. Committee reports
- Secretary's Report was tabled [attached to the minutes]. Stressed that residents should support the council's desire to get feedback on the licensing regulations. JRA supports council article 4 directions on preventing family homes being converted into HMOs. Bluebell Pub extension granted but with strict conditions. Former Northern Sinfonia building plans have been refused. Bluehouse roundabout proposals working group – hoping to publish new plans for consultation this month: the process is delayed. The Exchange – used permitted development rights to convert into residential accommodation: nothing could be done to prevent this under law. The property will be used for students.

- There will be another Gardens competition next year. Food Market keeps going strong. Christmas tree will be on Acorn Road again. Traders are involved and there will be other events and activities [Lighting of tree will be on 7th December]
6. Streets for People
 - 18 possible modifications have been listed, 12 have been prioritised. On 18th September the council will be approving and putting out to consultation. JRA will pass the information on to residents. The consultation will allow residents to make comments on each possible scheme. Both online and on paper.
 - This links up to other areas – Heaton and Ouseburn, Fenham and Arthur’s Hill.
 - Does the scheme encourage drivers to obey the 20mph limits. There will be more pedestrian crossings which will slow cars down. We can request hand-held speed cameras. JRA will ask again.
 7. Play Streets – initiatives to close streets to encourage children to play with neighbours in a safe street. Street closure depends on being able to staff it by parents so needs a critical mass of families to make it work. First effort is a street party on 24th September on Sanderson Road.
 8. Treasurer’s report presented (tabled). Reviewed and audited accordingly.
 9. Election of committee members
 - Matt Allsop
 - Dawn Dunn (co-opted) – will run the Gardens competition.
 - Paul Easton, Andrew Ross, David Houpt: nominated but unable to attend this meeting
 - Committee members accepted. Officers to be elected at the next committee meeting – acting Chair and Treasurer to operate in the meantime.
 10. Keep Jesmond Clean: report by Gavin Aarvold
 - Gavin – lots of groups trying to clean up Newcastle. KJC is the innovation of Councillors Dan Perry and Stella Postlethwaite. Takes an area at a time and tries to clean it up. Most successful in Jesmond Vale when a resident took on organising friends and neighbours. KJC creating 12 zones in Jesmond to try to pick and clean a zone in two hours. KJC can offer extra volunteers, equipment and insurance to help streets do their own litter picks but can also get the council to collect rubbish. But it needs a person to organise each pick and this is an appeal to local people to get involved and offer to run an area. Fern Avenue residents run a rota to pick each week.
 11. Matters of local concern
 - Some streets seem to have bins at the front of the house. This should only be by special arrangement.