

## e-Bulletin – January 2014

### Looking back and looking forward – Tony Waterston, JRA Chair

The JRA has just entered its 50<sup>th</sup> year: an opportunity for both looking back, and looking forward. We'll be sending out a history of the Association written by Jean Baty (one of the founder members) and why we started – it was to do with paying the rates..

I would like to collect descriptions of important milestones in the life and work of the JRA and would be very grateful if anyone with a long memory can write to me with a brief note of the event which we can add to the historical record. If it is entertaining or instructive - even better.

What were the memorable events in Jesmond last year? The closure of the Library, and the magnificent efforts of Jesmondites to keep it running, must head the list.

The community festival was a great success and the number of events and attendance continue to go up. Jesmond can be deservedly proud of the festival, which so many groups in the community contribute to.

The third important issue in which the JRA has been recently involved was the grant which the City Council obtained to improve our streets through both the DIY and the retail projects. These projects are being organised by Sustrans. They have the potential to make a huge difference to getting round in Jesmond and to the nature of our environment, so we look forward with excitement to seeing the proposals from Sustrans soon ( February?) . Finding a solution which pleases everyone won't be easy, but the feedback received shows that a very large number of people support a scheme that makes it easier to get about safely on foot and on two wheels.

And 2014? We have several initiatives under way and would like your support and input to them all:

- Improving neglected gardens (notably in HMOs). This is a long standing problem and we are working with the council and estate agents to set up a maintenance scheme whereby landlords would pay a standard sum for a basic improvement package. More on this soon.
- Building better relationships with new students. Fern Avenue has an excellent welcome pack which is sent out to all houses in their street each year and we would like to see this being done wherever there is a high turnover of residents. To this end we support the development of new local resident groups, especially in areas with a high student population. If you would like help in setting up a group then let us know.
- A resident has asked us to support initiatives to conserve energy and disseminate information on the use of renewables. Looking forward, the need for conservation of energy and reduction of carbon emissions is crucially important, to our community and beyond. We shall be preparing an information pack on home energy and offers of help with this would be greatly appreciated.
- We'll be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a number of events at the Community Festival, including a *Tour de Jesmond* on bikes with local luminaries and elders. Senior citizens especially welcome and I'll be recruiting actively very soon! Hopefully this will coincide with some Sustrans events to highlight the new people friendly street projects.
- The JRA will continue to give a strong emphasis to a robust approach to planning applications which do not benefit the nature of our community.

And finally – I would like to record a big thank you from the whole JRA committee for the excellent work done by Katie McLeod in relation to Jesmond Library. She has represented the JRA committee on the planning group and will continue to act as director/trustee of the *Friends of Jesmond Library* after her move to Tynemouth. She has also been a great team player on the committee and we shall miss her.

We would welcome interest from Jesmond residents in filling the two current vacancies on the committee. Please write to Ron Armstrong, JRA secretary, if you are interested.

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### **Recent Planning Issues – Nils Clemmetsen, JRA lead member for Planning**

There is a steady trickle of planning issues that affect Jesmond residents in varying ways. The main issues over the last three months are as follows:

#### **Barnardos Office site**

The developers appealed against the City Council Planning Committee decision to reject the original plans submitted for the proposed redevelopment of the Barnardos Office site. The appeal hearing took place at the Mansion House (Fernwood Rd, Jesmond) on 26 November 2013. The JRA opposed the original application and supported the rejection at the hearing.

In parallel to the appeal the applicants submitted a new planning application that was very similar to the previous application other than one pair of semi-detached houses has been omitted. The City Council decided not consider this application until the outcome of the previous appeal was known.

We have just heard that the applicant has won the appeal hearing. This means that planning permission has been obtained for the scheme as originally proposed ie 10 x 3 storey (5 bedroom detached and semi-detached dwellings) and 1 x 2 storey (4 bedroom detached dwelling) to be built in place of Barnardos Office building.

#### **HMOs**

10 and 12 Granville Gardens - Planning permission to use these properties as HMOs was refused by the Planning Committee of the City Council on the 8th March, 2013. This decision has been upheld on appeal.

The appeal against conversion of 22 Lily Crescent from a 6 bed to 7 bed HMO was dismissed.

#### **Business premises**

Pizza Express, 92 Osborne Road has applied for the following:

- Erection of two jumbrellas
- Variation of conditions 2 and 11 of planning permission 2007/2046/02/DET dated 19/07/2013 (to increase the number of covers on the premises from 108 to 128 and removal of condition 11 to extend consumption of food and drink to the external areas of the premises).

The JRA has submitted an objection to this application on the basis that outside seating was not allowed under the original application due to the unacceptable behaviour of those at outside tables when the Gresham Hotel occupied the premises and that young women in particular were subject to abuse when they walked by on the pavement.

Due to the number of objections the two applications will now be considered for decision at the next Planning Committee meeting to be held on 17th January 2013. The officers' recommendation to the committee is that they grant a temporary permission to expire on 31.01.2015.

Finally you may also be interested to know that garish illuminated free-standing sign facing onto the north end of Osborne Road at Euro Medicare Clinic was put up without planning permission and was refused planning permission when it was applied for. This is now subject to an appeal.

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### **Report on meeting with Vera Baird, Police Commissioner for Northumbria Police – Ron Armstrong, JRA Secretary**

The JRA was invited to send a representative to a meeting with Vera Baird (Police Commissioner for Northumbria Police) which was organised by Nick Brown MP and the local Jesmond councillors. The purpose of the meeting, on 10/1/2014, was to discuss current issues in Jesmond where the police are involved.

Those present at the meeting were Vera Baird + assistant, Nick Brown + assistant, Peter Breakey

(Councillor for North Jesmond), Felicity Mendelson (Councillor for South Jesmond), and Ron Armstrong (JRA).

The councillors went through their concerns re policing in Jesmond:

1. There were not enough police on the streets in Jesmond at the times when they were most needed, 10pm to 12 midnight and 2am to 4am and not enough information from the police about how their resources were being deployed. Vera Baird promised to take this up with the Chief Constable and to come back to us in a matter of weeks.

Nick Brown wanted to know whether the transient noise problems on the streets 10pm to 12 midnight was due to persons from outside Jesmond or were they from persons living in Jesmond. Vera Baird will ask the police if it is practical to try and discover this by asking those they stop questions about their background etc.

2. There are currently a significant number of burglaries in Jesmond from HMOs eg student laptops. Vera Baird promised she would take this up with the Chief Constable.

3. Cycling without lights. There has already been a police campaign but councillors noted that this has not solved the problem and such campaigns need to be repeated to be effective.

4. Taxies parking in bus stops etc. The problems were agreed – but I am not sure that any solution was agreed. Use of cameras to monitor parking blackspots, eg on Osborne Road was discussed. The City Council were reported to be opposed to this. This issue may be taken up with the City Council again.

The councillors agreed to supply Nick Brown with the addresses of student properties which are causing persistent problems if the response from the universities seems to be proving ineffective. He will then take these up directly with the Vice Chancellor of Newcastle.

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**A thank you and reminder – Bernie Whiting, Treasurer JRA**

As you probably know, Jesmond Residents Association relies on donations (we recommend £5 a year per household) for its funding and we would like to thank you for your financial support in the past.

Many residents make their annual donation by standing order, the Association's preferred way of receiving your financial support. If you currently donate by cash or cheque but wish to do so by standing order in future, please let our Treasurer know, his details are given at the end of this message.

If you have not donated in the past but wish to do so now, or have overlooked your regular cash or cheque donation and want to donate this way again, our Treasurer will be pleased to receive your donation.

Thank you for again for your past and future support.

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