



JESMOND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



e-Bulletin – Autumn 2014

Introduction – Tony Waterston

Writing this in October 2014 there seems to be much more active discussion about current issues affecting us in Jesmond than in the past. Or is this my imagination? Clearly Acorn Rd has been a hot issue – for almost a year at least, since the public meeting held jointly by the JRA and Sustrans was back in November 2013. Other topics which have been hotly discussed are traffic changes in Forsyth Rd, planning applications for McArdle Homes in Burdon Tce, communal bins and the piecemeal approach to cycling developments in Jesmond. It is good that there is public debate but do we have the right means of collecting views of all the public of Jesmond? I think not. The consultation on Acorn Rd was carried out more thoroughly than any I have experience of but still there were only 624 responses – a large number but still only 17% of the 3,668 households in North Jesmond. Is that the best we can do?

In this e-bulletin we cover the issue of consultation, together with Acorn Rd, planning issues, a library update, and a useful account of a recent meeting on traffic issues around the private schools which exemplifies some of the problems we face. Your views are welcome on how the consultation process could be improved.

Our 50th anniversary year is drawing to a close and I would remind you that copies of the JRA history written by Jean Baty are available in the Library. You will also find a file in the library which contains a copy of all the significant bulletins sent out on Linkmail. This is primarily for those residents who do not use email. Please spread the word! And also do notify your friends about going onto Linkmail, for those who do use the internet. Just send an email to Ron Armstrong and he will add your name.

Public Consultation on local issues – Tony Waterston

Consultation currently has a bad reputation: not just in Jesmond but probably in most other local authorities in the UK. To many people it implies that the Council is sending out information to a few local people, receiving comments and then going ahead with the proposals without any changes. From the council's perspective, often a genuine effort is made to understand local opinions – but the response rate is depressingly low, and how many people read what comes through the letter box from the council or what is posted on lampposts?

Also, how much effort is made to explain fully the nature of the proposals, the source of funding, the alternatives, and what the bottom line is for the council on implementation?

Recent consultations which have been controversial are those on Acorn Rd (when more effort was made than ever in my experience to get it right), communal bins (to which there has been much local opposition), Forsyth Rd works at Great North Rd, and Jesmond Dene Rd proposals which are current. There have also been numerous building planning issues though the procedure for these is more clearcut.

The defects of consultation as currently perceived by residents are:

- Insufficient time to consider the issues

- Methods used for consultation are not always accessible, and the information does not go out sufficiently widely
- Lack of information to residents to assist decision making
- Lack of an understanding (by residents) of the background to the issue concerned
- Lack of perception (by the City Council) of how the issue will play in the community
- Lack of clarity in the process on how the outcome of the consultation will affect the decision and what weight is given to residents' views (eg in the communal bin consultation residents were told that this would go ahead unless 30% positively opposed it – this may not work if there is a small resident response)

How can the situation be improved? We welcome constructive suggestions which can be fed back to the council, and shall be meeting relevant officers with local councillors for further discussion.

My suggestions are for starters:

- More background information to be sent out on reasons for the development and options available for alteration
- More use of local meetings (as have happened recently in South Jesmond) to ensure that local resident views are taken early
- Greater use of social media for consultation to reach a wider audience
- Local networks to be developed via local residents' associations to ensure better coverage of population (this could take a while to build but JRA is happy to work with residents to establish such networks)
- Use of a simple majority (of those who respond) to decide on key issues with only one response per household and a careful noting of post codes in the analysis.

Please write in to me or Ron with your own suggestions on how to improve the system.

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Planning Issues – Nils Clemmetsen

There have been a number of significant development proposals in Jesmond since the JRA Newsletter was published in the Summer, primarily concentrated in the Brandling Village Conservation Area to the east of Tankerville Terrace.

Helen McArdle Care Home and Nursery, Burdon Terrace

The proposal is to demolish the existing buildings that house the former NHS Trust Fleming Nuffield Unit and build a 4 storey (63 bedroom / 73 beds) care home facing Burdon Terrace and to the north a single storey 80 place day nursery.

A public meeting was organised by the South Jesmond Ward Councillors. It was well attended. The primary concerns are the traffic that will be generated, in particular by the nursery and the scale and design of the care home. There were many objections submitted to the City Council, both by residents and the owner and tenants of the Fleming Business Centre. The users of the Fleming Business Centre will be particularly affected as the vehicular entrance to the Care Home and Nursery is planned to be through the same single width vehicle entrance that serves the Business Centre. The JRA submitted an objection.

Newcastle High School for Girls, Tankerville Terrace

Following the amalgamation of Central High and Church High Schools for Girls to form the Newcastle High School for Girls, the school is proposing to redevelop the former Church High buildings for use as the Senior School. They would like to have the building completed and in use for September 2016. At present the site is not in use as the school is using the former Central High buildings on Eskdale Terrace.

The main feature of the proposal is to demolish the existing modern buildings that formed the Church High Junior School and replace this with a three storey building.

In addition the school would like to construct an artificial pitch on the playing field they lease on the Town Moor. The JRA has objected to this on the basis that this is likely to increase development along the whole strip of land to the east of the Great North Road, north of Clayton Road.

Site of Former Jesmond Picture House

Whilst this is an historical planning issue – planning permission was granted in 2008 - readers may be interested to know that construction has now started on this building which will house a Sainsbury local supermarket on the ground floor.

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Jesmond Library update – Sarah Breakey

Jesmond Library has just celebrated its First Birthday with an Annual Meeting followed by a social event with food and drink donated by volunteers and local businesses and a fabulous 1st Birthday Book Worm cake!

Jesmond Library – organised and operated by volunteers has become a thriving, welcoming and diverse Community hub, as well as a public library.

Since opening we have:

- Opened the library for three days a week to allow people to borrow books, DVD's, use the People's Network Computers, read daily newspapers, and have a cup of coffee;
- Opened up for seven days a week for a huge range of activities and events, from community meetings and classes to concerts, drama and private room bookings;
- Launched a new website, Facebook and Twitter accounts;
- Organised Children's activities, from story time to crafts and painting, and a much improved and diverse Children's section;
- Established a monthly series of talks and social gatherings, on the theme of Wellbeing for Life, jointly with the Elders Council of Newcastle;
- Made monthly updates of our stock – Adults' and Children's - to include latest releases, suggestions from users and titles from prize shortlists such as Mann Booker and Kate Greenaway;
- Produced a dedicated Information Area –giving space to publicise library events, display local and regional information and events;
- Recruited and trained over 100 volunteers;
- Refurbished and upgraded the Community room to become the Catherine Cookson Room.

Over the past year there have been well over 100 events at the Library, ranging from children's activities, wellbeing for life, music, plays, Italian and art classes. New events are being added all the time – look out for yoga, ukulele for beginners and play reading.

Our Thursday Talks are now a very well established event in the Jesmond Calendar. A full programme of talks is booked into the Library well into 2015! These cover a wide range of topics – *Butterflies, Northumberland Place Names, Local businesses, R.S. Thomas* and lots more!

A Big Thank you

Our first year's success is due to many people and organisations, especially the local residents who have come forward in remarkable numbers bringing a whole range of skills, talent and knowledge, but in particular their time and financial support.

How can you help?

Be a volunteer – please call into the library or email for information enquiries@jesmondlibrary.co.uk.

Make a donation – please call into the Library or email for information finance@jesmondlibrary.co.uk.

Visit the website – www.jesmondlibrary.co.uk for further details, application forms, direct debit forms etc..

We look forward to hearing from you or seeing you in the Library.

Opening times: **Tuesday 9.30am – 16.30pm**
 Thursday 9.30am – 19.30pm
 Saturday 9.30am – 16.30pm



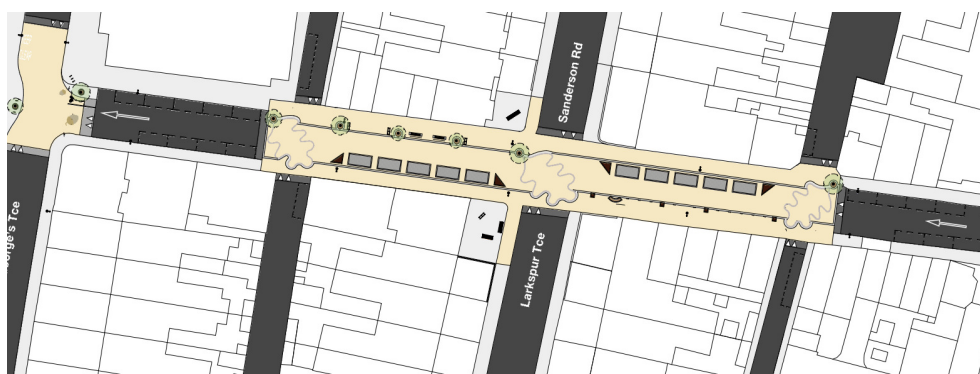
**Happy First
Anniversary**



Acorn Road update – Ron Armstrong

The earlier discussions on proposed changes to Acorn Rd have been set out in the JRA Summer 2014 newsletter. In essence two different schemes for changes had evolved by then:

Scheme 1 with one way vehicle traffic from Osborne Rd to St Georges Terrace. This scheme was estimated to cause the loss of 10 car parking spaces.



Scheme 2 with two way traffic but with a number of the features of scheme 1 retained eg continuous pavements. This scheme was estimated to cause the loss of 8 parking spaces.



The City Council put both schemes out for consultation in September. The Council decided that paper copies of the consultation documents should go only to dwellings in the North Jesmond ward. However all residents could respond electronically on a topic wall at letstalknewcastle. The outcome was that 624 responses were received of which 48 per cent backed the first scheme compared with 31 per cent who backed the second scheme. 13 per cent wanted no change and eight per cent did not state a preference. However it should be noted that some who expressed opinions did not live in Jesmond and that in some cases there was more than one opinion from the same dwelling. Among residents who could be identified as living in North Jesmond, 47% preferred Scheme 1, with 41% opting for Scheme 2 and the remainder either opting for no change or not expressing a clear preference.

On the basis of the outcome of the consultation the City Council has decided to go ahead with Scheme 1, which will have the following features (copied from the City Council site):

- Turning the street into one way for traffic
- Raising the road surface to the levels of footpaths making it easier for pushchairs
- Widening pavements
- Introducing a contra flow system for cyclists to enable them to pedal in both directions
- Reducing the speed limit to 20mph
- New public seating and landscaping improvements with a tree lined avenue
- Introducing smart traffic lights at the junction with Osborne Road

The cost of the scheme (£350,000) is being met by the Cycle City Ambition Fund, and work is expected to start in January 2015. Below are artist's impressions of Acorn Rd after the proposed changes (copied from the City Council site).



Traffic in Eskdale Terrace and related streets - Roger Loxley

In early October a meeting was convened between South Jesmond councillors, council officers, representatives from the JRA and the three main schools in the area to discuss some of the issues around traffic congestion and safer cycling in the area of Jesmond around Brandling Park, Eskdale Terrace and Eslington Terrace. The main focus of the discussions centred on problems and consequences that emerge from seeming ad hoc plans and decisions about road and cycling developments. Why is it the case that some of the plans outlined or issued recently do not seem to be joined up in any coherent fashion?

Council officers did explain the problems that emerge from the various sources of funding that inevitably result in a piecemeal outcome but the representatives from the JRA and the schools wondered whether there was real appreciation of the consequences of these decisions on the wider community. It appeared to some that the considerations were narrowly focussed and therefore had ramifications that went well beyond the immediate vicinity of proposed developments.

The outcome of the meeting was actually quite positive. The council officers seemed relatively open to ideas about ways in which the proposed plans will impact on the area and also open to alternative suggestions as to how to improve traffic flow and to make cycling in the area that bit safer to encourage more people not to drive into an already heavily congested part of the city.

A further meeting is to be held once the councillors and officers have had an opportunity to develop some further ideas.

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JRA advice on dealing with night time noise - Brian Yhearm

Many residents suffer from night time noise. Here is some general advice on dealing with this issue.

What should you do if you are affected by night-time noise?

If the noise is coming from a particular property eg a noisy party in a house, you should contact the City Council's Night Watch team as soon as the problem becomes evident. Its hours are Monday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday nights: 20.00hrs to 04.00hrs - Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday nights: 19.00hrs to 01.30hrs

The number to call to speak to the team directly is **0781 297 5246**. The team can also be contacted via Envirocall on (0191) **278 7878**. Make sure that you obtain the log number for your call.

When the Night Watch team is not in operation or when the source of the noise is not from a particular property, or if the source of the noise cannot be identified, then you should call the police on the non-emergency number 101.

When you call 101 you will be asked for some personal details and details of what is happening/has happened. When you call a log is created and you can ask for the log number as a record. The police may want to contact you again to report back on what has happened but if you don't want to be contacted again, you can just say so when you call. Quite often people are disturbed by incidents but do not wish to make a report in the middle of the night because of the further disturbance involved. **If this applies, you should try to report the incident to the police the following day and ask for it to be logged.** If an incident is not logged it does not feature in

the police records and as a result the police are less likely to regard night noise as a serious problem in Jesmond.

Every report you make to the Night Noise team and/or the Police is recorded and can be used in evidence against repeat offenders to ensure they stop being a nuisance to you.

Contact the Universities

If there is repeated night time noise from the same property which you believe has been caused by students, it is well worth contacting the universities. Each university has a record of where its students live. It will contact them and may begin a disciplinary process. Most students in Jesmond are Newcastle University students but some are from Northumbria University. It is normally advisable to email both universities in the first instance and to copy the email to one of your councillors.

Contact details are

Newcastle University: (email) casework@ncl.ac.uk or (phone) 0191 222 5293.

Northumbria University: (email) rc.accomodation@northumbria.ac.uk or (phone) 0191 227 4209.

Councillors' contact details are:

North Jesmond

peter.breakey@newcastle.gov.uk
catherine.pagan@newcastle.gov.uk
gerry.keating@newcastle.gov.uk

South Jesmond

david.hardman@newcastle.gov.uk
felicity.mendelson@newcastle.gov.uk
arlene.ainsley@newcastle.gov.uk

Managing Agents

Finally, if you know the managing agent for the premises which is the source of the noise, it may be worth contacting them and explaining the problem.

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JRA Committee Autumn 2014

Chair: Tony Waterston,

Vice-Chair: Ian Nelson,

Secretary: Ron Armstrong,

Treasurer: David Etchells,

Sarah Breakey (Lead on Library matters)

Annabelle Coakley (Lead on student issues)

Fiona Coleman,

Nils Clemmetsen (Lead on Planning issues)

Roger Loxley,

Crispin Welby,

Brian Yhearm (Lead on anti-social behaviour issues)

Contact with the JRA should be via

The Chair - tony.waterston@newcastle.ac.uk , 0191 2816752

or via the Secretary r.d.armstrong@blueyonder.co.uk , 0191 2812923.

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Financing the JRA – Ron Armstrong

The JRA is entirely run by volunteers who give their services for free. However there are a number of unavoidable costs such as

1. Room hire,
2. Maintenance of the JRA web site,
3. Printing and distributing the hard copies of the summer newsletter.

To meet these costs the JRA relies on donations. If you appreciate the work done by the JRA you may like to give a donation. For a one off donation you should send a cheque, payable to the *Jesmond Residents Association* to Ron Armstrong, 73 Grosvenor Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 2NQ.

If you are prepared to set up a standing order please contact me (r.d.armstrong@blueyonder.co.uk) and I will send you the appropriate standing order form. For standing orders we recommend a donation of £5 per year.

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