

Minutes of the Launch Meeting of the Charlton Central Residents Association

Fossdene School –19th September 2007

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The meeting began at 7.45.

Agenda

- 1) Election of Chair and Secretary for the meeting
- 2) Welcome and introduction to tonight's meeting
- 3) Guest Speaker: Nick Raynsford, MP for Greenwich and Woolwich
- 4) Election of Management Committee
- 5) Consideration and adoption of the proposed Constitution (obtainable on the night and previously available by e-mail)
- 6) Agreement of Membership Subscription
- 7) Future plans, questions and comments
- 8) Any other business

Business of the meeting

Agenda Item 1

It was proposed and agreed without objection by those present that Dave Picton act as interim Chair and Len Weir act as interim Secretary for the evening.

Agenda Item 2

Following a welcome from the Chair, the purpose of the meeting was explained.

The Chair said that it was proposed that we go through the formalities needed to set up an organisation to be called the Charlton Central Residents Association, including the adoption of a constitution for the Association and to agree a Management Committee for the first year. This Management Committee would be bigger than usual in order to include people from all the roads in the Association. We would also need to agree a Membership Fee and to begin, based on the many points raised during the earlier meetings in St Richards Hall, to begin to plan the priorities for the Association for the next year.

Agenda Item 3

The Chair then introduced the guest speaker, Nick Raynsford MP and asked him to say a few words.

Nick Raynsford thanked those present for inviting him to an historic occasion, that is, the launch of a Residents Association for this area of Charlton. He said that such Associations elsewhere had served to act as an effective voice for local residents and put forward their views on a range of issues. This was an appropriate moment to launch the Association, as there was an increased Government emphasis on developing ways in which local people could be more involved locally through strong local communities, most recently set out in the Green Paper called "Governance of Britain". There was an increased obligation on local Councils to consult and increased opportunities for local resident groups to seek redress when things were not being dealt with properly.

There were a range of proposals out for consultation, including Citizens Juries, a new duty to consult and a requirement to involve people in policy development at an early stage. As a consequence, a new Residents Association was going with the grain of Government thinking as well as local thinking.

He acknowledged that running efficient local organisations was hard work and the Association would need contributions from everyone according to their ability. However, local communities could achieve things for their area, for example, the contribution of the Coin Street Association to the improvement of an area of Waterloo. There were many local issues in Charlton including crime and anti-social behaviour, transport and schooling (especially access to secondary education). The growing redevelopment of the Waterfront/Charlton/Woolwich areas was an especial challenge. It was therefore important that, through the Management Committee, local people made sure that those in public office listened and worked with us to gain solutions to some of the unique problems in the area. He felt it important to build on the positive feelings there were about the area, to have a close and supportive relationship with local Councillors and the police

He gave his best wishes for the future to the new Association and hoped to attend meetings from time to time and to have regular contact with the Management Committee to assist them where possible in gaining satisfactory outcomes

The Chair offered his thanks to Nick Raynsford for his encouraging words.

The Chair then asked those present, especially if they had not attended any of the previous meetings, to state what they felt to be key issues for action for the new Association in the context of the remarks made by Nick Raynsford.

The following key points of concern were raised –

- The poor level of cleanliness of Wellington Gardens, in particular in relation to dog fouling, and the failure of the Council to respond to requests to deal with dog walkers who did not clean up after their animals. Also the need to clean the local streets regularly, some even weekly.
- Problems in contacting the local Community Police service at the right time, often because they seemed too busy to take calls.
- A particular group of temporary local residents who were allegedly contributing to a range of problems including littering, theft, dog fighting and sexual harassment of passers-by; such anti-social behaviour being terrifying, especially for older people and single people.
- Some street drinkers who had been moved on from Charlton Station. Questions were asked about the level of prosecutions locally for a range of anti-social behaviours
- Poor air quality around Charlton, possibly due to dust from the extensive demolition work in Victoria Way. There was also a plague of rats locally as a result.
- Transport difficulties generally and the poor cycle lanes. In particular, there was concern in relation to an apparent proposed extension of the Congestion Charging Zone eastwards to cover Greenwich and the consequent impact on businesses in East Greenwich.
- Problems arising from local football matches at The Valley – both for general and disability parking but more importantly for access in case of emergency (fire/ambulance). There seemed to be no integrated plan to deal with the roads affected.
- Problems with dumped supermarket trolleys and graffiti
- Problems with dumped items, including cars, in the area of Warren Walk and also insensitive car parking in that area as it was not covered by the controlled parking arrangements

It was also pointed out that, previous problems having been acknowledged, Charlton was a nice area to live in, with an established community of long standing and that, with the help of the Association to give us an effective voice, we could all make it a place to be proud of.

Agenda Item 4

The Chair said that we were initially seeking volunteers for the Management Committee and asked those with organisational and practical skills to consider putting themselves forward, a volunteer from each road as a minimum. There would be the possibility of co-opting people from those roads who were not represented at the meeting. These people would run the activities of the

Association for the first year and allocate official posts (e.g. Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) at the first meeting. However, there would be formal elections for these posts at the AGM of the Association next year in accordance with the proposed Constitution. 19 people put themselves forward and were requested to list their names and contact details at the end of the meeting. The meeting gave them a round of applause.

Agenda Item 5

The Chair then introduced the draft Constitution to the meeting, (copies on all chairs), saying that it had already been subject to a considerable amount of discussion and re-drafting. He felt it to be a well-written document and that it should be given a chance. He suggested that, before asking to have it adopted formally by the meeting, those present make any comments for the Management Committee to consider over the year to come. Any necessary adjustments could then be made at the AGM next year. However, it was necessary to adopt this version in order to enable the work of the Association to begin.

The following comments were made for future consideration –

- There was an appreciation of the fact that the need for equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice was highlighted in the Aims of the Association. However, the Management Committee were asked to consider whether more detail was required setting out exactly which potential areas of discrimination were covered.
- The Management Committee were asked to consider whether a formal role of Welfare Officer was needed on the Management Committee (Section 6.1)
- The Management Committee were asked to consider ways to formally include young people and minority groups in the running of the Association so as to include as many people as possible from a wide range of backgrounds, perhaps by establishing a Young Persons forum as a formal sub-committee for the Association.

The Chair then formally put forward the Constitution for adoption by the meeting. This was agreed without dissent. (proposed Brian ??, seconded John Tidy)

Agenda Item 6

The Chair proposed to the meeting that the Association adopt an annual Membership Subscription of £5 per person living in the roads covered. There would be no upper age limit or lower age limit, in order that nobody would be excluded. All those paying a membership subscription would be entitled to an individual vote during the formal affairs of the Association. (He said that the working group had considered a subscription by household but that this had been discounted due to the potential problems it would cause in a voting

process). The membership subscriptions would be used for the legitimate business of the Association, for example paying for the newsletter, leaflets and hire of halls as required.

The Membership Subscription would last for a year, ending on 31st December of each year. However, for this inaugural year, the membership subscription will last until 31st December 2008.

The Chair also asked those present to agree to the opening of a bank Account in the name of the Association. John Tidy proposed that this bank account be placed with the Unity Trust bank (?) and that it be operated by the Management Committee in accordance with the detailed terms required by the bank as set out in the application pack to open such an account. These terms were available for scrutiny by any interested party at the meeting or later.

It was agreed, without dissent, that the Management Committee apply to open an account with the Unity Trust bank as suggested.

It was also agreed, without dissent, that the Membership Subscription for the Association should be set at £5 per person.

The Chair asked those present who were willing to sign up as a Member to do so at the end of the meeting, putting their personal contact details and address on the application form supplied on each chair. The Chair also encouraged additional donations by those present to assist the work of the Association.

Agenda Item 7

The Chair then briefly set out some proposed plans for the Association in the future months. These were -

- To produce a regular newsletter, hopefully four times a year. This would be delivered to all houses in the area covered by the Association. It was hoped to include small ads and advertisements from local business, restaurants and shops. It was also hoped to negotiate discounts for Association Members.
- For the Management Committee to meet 3-4 times before the end of the year, with a specific brief to elect officers, establish a range of sub-committees and to begin work on the many issues raised during all the meetings to date, making appropriate representations on behalf of the Association.
- To organise one social event for Members before the end of the year.
- Given that communication and information-sharing will be central to the workings of the Association, to begin to plan a website for the Association which would have links to key organisations and a range of

e-mail boxes for residents to communicate with the Management Committee; as well as copies of minutes of meetings etc.

- To begin to establish links and liaison arrangements with named individuals in key organisations, including Council Departments and the Community Police.
- To begin work in establishing relationships with local businesses, to introduce the work of the Association and to emphasise the need for all to work in partnership for the betterment of the area.

Agenda Item 8

P.C. Crowther (from the local Community Police team) took the opportunity to give those present a brief update on the work of the team, how they operate and some key issues that they had been involved with in the previous few weeks. These included dealing with various episodes of anti-social behaviour, licensing issues in relation to The Valley Public House in Elliscombe Road and also liaison with a local housing association, Hyde Housing about a number of matters. He emphasised the importance of information from local residents in helping them identify “hot-spots” where police attention might be required.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.10 p.m. and thanked all present for coming.