

Henbury & Brentry Community Council

Community Conference

Saturday 28th June 2008

Wesley College

College Park Drive

Henbury Road

Bristol

Conference Report

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Wesley Conference Centre

Introduction.

Attendees: 56 (attendees list attached – appendix 1)

This highly successful event was held at Wesley Theological College, in a meeting space highly congenial to an interactive, structured but informal event. It was paid for and administered by the Bristol City Council Neighbourhood Partnership for Henbury and Southmead. The Community Council is grateful to Andrew McGrath and Sam Parker of BCC for their support of the event.

After a lively introduction to the day by Paul Thompson a brief overview of the past year was given.

Since Previous Conference

Henbury is now an area where there is a growing sense of community with groups of people who are increasingly dedicated to seeing things improved. The following list, in no particular order, is of groups that have either started or developed well since the last conference.

Search group, Walking group, Travel group, Prayer group, Events group, Futures group.

Add to this the regular activities that go on in the Library, Schools, Churches, Leisure Centre, Children's Centres & Youth Centre there is always something going on if folk want to join in.

The meeting then broke in to its workshop activities. Attendees were able to choose up to two of the four workshops available and were asked to offer up any views or concerns that they had regarding issues of concern.

The following workshops were available to those attending:

1. Older People
2. Built Environment
3. Young People
4. Community Safety and the environment

Workshops

The notes below are those taken by the group facilitators at each of their workshops.

1. Older People's Groups

Adult Social Care

- We don't have enough social activities, including lunch clubs, coffee mornings etc

Transport

- Loss of the 55 bus route has affected a lot of people
- A feeling that the top of Brentry is left out and does not have any local facilities
- First Bus focuses too much on profit and not enough on service.
- Many of the routes are too long and do not really serve the local community
- We need more competition in Bristol. London was given as an example of good, reliable bus service.
- Suggested we stop subsidising first bus routes and redirect funding to community transport to enable them to expand local services filling in the gaps. Community Transport needs to be better advertised. Lawrence Weston community transport given as a good example. Put this on our shopping list to the council – Agreed by the whole group.

Community Centre

- Community Centre for Henbury. This has been previously tried, and failed.
- Can we look at how we can use existing facilities?
- Feeling that none of the current provision is central enough
- Despite the problem of resources we still need the facilities and should still aspire to have these facilities.
- We need to see how we can use the resources there are such as Section 106 funding a community centre part of which should focus on older people
- Section 106 and other local resources (Section 106 from the PRC housing)
- Can we organise a visit to south Bristol to see the provision that they have developed?

Older peoples housing needs

- Sheltered housing, dementia etc. how do we feel? Explanation given of what the council are doing.
- What's happening about capital work to help people living in their own (care and repair) homes?
- People would like to see the full range of services available within Henbury and Brentry.
- They want Resource Centre, Residential Care and Dementia Care
- Wardens

Communication

- Pilot bus service to Morrisons etc
- There used to be a bonus given to older people moving from a 3 bed house to a flat. Can we restart such a scheme?
- Brentry Bus needed
- Shelf Community Bus needed
- Community Centre. Not enough spent in Henbury
- Need for community cash
- Key to elderly activities
- EPH/Recourse centre/ Very Sheltered Housing/ Respite Re Ablemay (?)
- Wardens and caretakers
- Toilets
- LWCT ---is demand-responsive
Need better route publicity
Special run to Morrisons/Asda

Notes: Not surprisingly, the issues effecting older people are numerous and crosscutting. A number of the above issues were repeated in the other workshops. The issues of potential isolation and the importance of being able to get around (particularly to the shops) were highlighted as major concerns for older people, as were health-related concerns. It is clear that residents feel that First Bus isn't providing an adequate service. It is **recommended** that First Bus be invited to attend an H&BCC meeting to answer people's concerns.

2. Built Environment Workshop

S. Glos proposals for up to 2600 houses N of railway line

These proposals were viewed with concern particularly with regard to: -

- Part of proposed area already floods
- Sewerage overload on Henbury's creaking system
- Building houses close to and under the flight path of a working airfield
- What measures will be taken to deal with traffic overload on Henbury & Brentry's roads?
- Unknown impact on existing schools in Brentry and Henbury

The one possible positive outcome that was envisaged was a likely larger catchment area for the Crow Lane Retail area.

Crow Lane Shops

The overall feeling of the two workshops was that the current Crow Lane frontage is well past its sell-by date and, consequently, does nothing to project the image of a modern, vibrant area to attract people to it.

In particular there is a need for complete re-development of the outdated buildings, some of which are visibly in need of refurbishment.

It was considered that frontage along Machin Rd. is a disgrace, makes poor use of the available area of land and is definitely in need of redevelopment. Any development must take into account the lorry and traffic problems current in Machin Road.

The loss of public toilets in the area was keenly felt and it seemed a really good idea to encourage Bristol City Council to pay shops to make some toilets available to public.

A final suggestion made was that an eminent town planner / architect be invited (George Ferguson's name was put forward) to give us a vision for the area.

Swimming Pool Site (Aldi)

Members were very uncertain that a supermarket / store was the best use for this area but recognised that Aldi had purchased the site and were going to apply for permission to build a store, which would provide goods at discount prices. These latter would be welcome to the community.

There was dismay expressed at the potential traffic problems with a school exactly opposite.

Facilities and Transport

Local facilities were considered to be lacking in the following detail:-

- ◆Coffee shop particularly attractive for young people
- ◆Purpose built health centre as existing not adequate

And the question of how long can Brentry and Henbury go without a Community Centre was asked once again.

Under the category of transport the following suggestions were made: -

- ◆ Bus stops should be provided with seats constructed in steel to be vandal proof
- ◆ The local bus transport operation should be expanded as in Lawrence Weston
- ◆ A reopened Henbury railway station could provide key links to Parkway and Temple Meads as well as Avonmouth.

A widespread occurrence in areas of Brentry and Henbury are problems with residents' car parking in many roads. No particular solution was suggested.

Brentry

Two comments relating to Brentry were; firstly that it has insufficient local shops and secondly that the Open Space and kids play area should be re-opened.

Notes: The issue of the whole of Crow Lane is clearly a priority for residents. People need to know what is planned and what could be done to improve the area. It is **recommended** that John Bos of BCC be invited to meet the group to discuss possible ways of progressing the issues raised above.

3. Young People / Youth Workshop

The front cover of *Time* magazine read - Britain's Youth, 'Unhappy, Unloved and Out of Control'. A survey carried out for *Time* suggested one fifth of adults were afraid to go out at night mainly due to fear of our young people. It intimated that young people enjoy intimidating adults and see it as entertaining and fun.

The British media will report major crime carried out by young people and it is very easy to get the impression all young people cause trouble in some way.

The Picture in Henbury

A picture was then given of the situation locally. The vast majority of young people live honest and peaceful lives, concentrate on their schooling and are a credit to their parents. A smaller number fall foul of underage drinking but still respect others and cause no real problems. We do, however have to face up to the fact drugs are available to those who want them despite the best efforts of our police force who are working hard to catch the main suppliers and dealers.

We then commented that most of the crime and fear was being generated by twenty or so young people who had been excluded from school, not really interested in getting work and had little or no support from their own families.

The Most Vulnerable

The people most at risk from this group were other young people who often had possessions stolen, were intimidated and often bullied. The actions of this small group were giving all young people a bad name and are generating fear amongst older folk as the impression given is that any group of kids must be up to no good and older folk are afraid to walk past them.

Reasons

Brief suggestions were given as to the reasons this group behave as they do, for instance;

- breakdown in family life
- little time spent with adults so that all influence is from within the group itself.
- very hard to place crime convictions
- lenient sentences given by judges
- influence of drink and drugs

Solutions

We therefore discovered there is a big cross generation divide that needs to be bridged if at all possible. Various things were discussed but the three issues the youth workshop would like taken further by the Community Council are;

1. Safety of our young people
2. Provision to be made for a new Community Centre
3. For adults to think about how to 'Reclaim the Streets'

4. Community Safety and Environment

Group 1 priorities

- Drugs and alcohol big problem
- Anti-social behaviour
- Fly tipping / litter / graffiti
- Anti social behaviour orders
- Burnt out vehicles
- Dog fouling
- Need notice on recycling banks. What can go in them? Could put article in next newsletter
- Recycling bins. Should they take old radios, record players, computers
- Litter
- Lighting
- Parking (inappropriately)
- Vandalism (Methodist Church)
- Skip schemes
- Overgrown trees (Conifers)
- Drugs
- Alcohol & underage drinking

Group 2 priorities

- Parking and transport
- Alcohol and drug issues
- Community response and engagement (Fear of Crime)
- Leisure centre – No parking for coaches
- To feel safe (Walking about)
- (Crow lane won't walk at night)
- Bird pooh especially outside food shops
- Dog fouling
- Public toilets (urinating)
- Environment Agency –Development at bottom of ford (invite to Search group meeting)
- Building community
- Standfast Road –yellow lines (Needs double)
- Criminal damage (Methodist Hall)
- Environment – safety issue and people using building, neighbours

Notes: It is clear that participants in this workshop take issue with a host of street-scene, anti-social behaviour issues. These may be issues that the Search Group or the local PACT is dealing with. It is **recommended** that the Search group meet with the membership of the H&BCC to discuss development of an action plan.

Overall conclusions

As can be seen, there are issues of considerable concern to residents regarding the environment (in its widest sense) in Henbury. It is also clear that there is a clear distinction between cumulative smaller issues (graffiti, vandalism etc) and larger single issues, such as transport (buses in particular) and the quality of facilities for local people.

What is also clear from the workshops and wider group discussions is that there is considerable local pride. People are proud to be residents of Henbury and Brentry and are concerned enough to take an active role in solving some of the area's problems.

Many attendees expressed concern at the likely problems should proposed housing developments take place near to the airfield. Not only will this impact on transport and traffic problems, but also create ancillary issues regarding potential increased flooding. It was agreed that as the developments will actually take place over the authority border in South Glos, efforts ought to be made by H&BCC to ascertain the exact plans and to try and have discussions with the neighbouring authority.

Participants' views on the event

Participants were asked to 'score' the event. Those who did so gave the event a resounding 'thumbs up', with well over 90% of participants stating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the day.

Among the criticisms was the statement that the event wasn't representative of the local community. This is acknowledged. There were no younger attendees, and the attendance at the young people's workshop was low. This is an issue for H&BCC to resolve as so many of the comments and concerns are related either directly or indirectly to younger people in the area.

All respondees stated that they would like to see these conferences continue.

What happens next?

In order for the issues raised to be dealt with it was suggested that folk who attended the workshops, and contributed with suggestions, should be contacted to see if they would be willing to help take some of the points forward.

Also, the churches and other voluntary bodies will be contacted to see if any help is forthcoming.