

Elsa Park Community Trust Annual General Meeting

26th October 2010

PRESENT

Board Members:

Tony Prior – Chairman (TP)
Angela Bailey – Resident Director (AMB)
Dan Brown- Kier Land Director (DB)
Barry Cook– Resident Director (BC)
Ian Kilday– Resident Director (IK)
Matthew Upex– Resident Director (MU)

In Attendance:

Emma Cunnington – Community Trust Manager
Rebecca Burke – Community Trust Administrator

Board Members Apologies:

Judith Smith- SKDC Appointed Director
Shirley Cliffe- Bourne Town Council Appointed Director

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the directors of the Elsa Park Community Trust Board.

2. Minutes of Last Annual General Meeting held on 20th October 2009.

The minutes were agreed and seconded by resident Rod Clarke.

3. Matters Arising

The following matters were reported to the meeting

3.1 Following concerns about road safety on Elsa Park residents were asked to support a petition for a 20MPH speed limit on the development. This was circulated at the meeting and residents were asked to sign on their way out.

3.2 Following an item in one of the newsletters, twelve residents came forward supporting road marking at the junction of Tilia Way and Aykcroft.

4. Taking the Trust Forward

Following the presentation to the last AGM, Ian Kilday reported progress made in developing a more formalised structure of the board.

4.1 The Website has been overhauled and updated.

4.2 Two new members of staff had been appointed and will start shortly. These are in the the posts of Community Trust Manager and Community Trust Administrator.

4.3 Resident Directors now hold portfolios for specific areas and these are:

Tony Prior – Operations
Angela Bailey – Finance and HR
Barry Cook – Communications
Ian Kilday – Admin and Legal

5. Operations

The Chair reported progress since the last meeting on Operational issues:

5.1 It had recently been announced that Elsea Park had won a prestigious award from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). The award recognises all the work that has been carried out over the past eight years to make the conservation area within Elsea Park Meadows such a thriving example of mixed wildlife habitats.

5.2 Kier have informed the Trust that some areas of Elsea Park are now ready to be transferred to the Trust and this process will be on going over the next few months. The Trust will be working very closely with Kier to ensure these areas are at an acceptable standard for transfer.

5.3 Dan Brown added the following items to the report

- Tarmac is now being laid on The Pollards and adjacent side streets with an expected timetable of completion by the end of November.
- Trees have been ordered for The Pollards and planting will commence in the near future.
- A new play area will be situated near the Community Centre and might incorporate some outdoor fitness equipment. Further information on this will follow.

Members Questions to the Board.

Q1 – When you come off the bypass into The Gables there is a big dip, can this be resurfaced as the problem seems to be getting worse.

A – (DB) I will get this area of road addressed.

Q2 – I live on Springbank Drive and the road/footpath is shocking. Builders park on the path all the time which makes it impossible to walk by and also leaves thick mud on the path as well as the road side. I've also had seven punctures over the last year which I think is attributed to the poor road surface. More respect needs to be given to the residents who are living on a building site.

A –(DB) We are now down to the last 12 houses and hope to be completely finished in this area in a couple of months. I will speak to the Site Manager and he will ensure that the builders are more respectful and that no builder/contractor is parking on the path.

Q3 – Going back to the Gables when will the roundabout be removed as it does not serve ny purpose and when the lorries drive straight over it the vibrations shake my house.

A – (DB) The repair and top out of the road and footpath will commence shortly and at this stage the roundabout will be removed.

Q4 – A sign for the Gables was promised three years ago but still has not materialised, when will this be erected?

A – (DB) I have no excuse as to why this has not been done and will look into this straight away.

6. Community Centre

- Angela Bailey updated the meeting on the progress to date on the Community Centre
- The first sod will be cut in two weeks' time prior to work on the foundations commencing.
- Some residents have completed the questionnaire on the new community centre and provided feedback. We are asking all residents to complete this questionnaire so we have a fair representation of what people would like to see in their new community centre. This questionnaire can be downloaded from the website
- We now have project leads for all aspects of the community centre and would like to thank everyone who has provided input, and the project leads for stepping up to the plate.
- The first draft of the equipment schedule has been completed
- The preliminary budget has been agreed for equipping the community centre, and stands at approximately £50,000.
- Once completed, the building will be valued at around £700,000, and should be an excellent facility for the members and the community in general.
- The Trust are currently liaising with Kier and making minor changes to the plans.
- Lots of ideas have been put forward so far in what the centre will be used for – for example a youth club, discos, coffee mornings, and drop in sessions.

Members Questions to the Board

Q5 – How big are the sports pitches going to be?

A – (AMB) These are not part of the Community Centre and football pitches will only be provided once 1200 properties have been built. At the community centre we are looking to put a play area and informal kick about area.

Q6 – Has a yearly operating cost been worked out?

A – (AMB) A full financial plan has not been worked out yet. Management of the centre will fall into the Trust Manager and Administrator roles.

Q6 – *Will the community centre be for Elsea Park residents only or will it be open to everyone?*

A – (AMB) *In the Section 106 agreement it says the community centre should be for the residents of Bourne. We are looking at doing differential rates for Elsea Park residents so they are able to hire the hall out at a cheaper rate. We will also be using the centre for commercial purposes so we are able to get the revenue in to support the running costs. We will need to strike the right balance when looking at this.*

Q7 – *What will happen if the Community Centre doesn't make a profit?*

A – (AMB) *We are aiming for the community centre to cover its own costs. We will need to work out a pricing structure and see how this runs and amend accordingly.*

7. Communications

Barry Cook reported to members the improvements made in communications

7.1 The new website is in place and the Trust welcomes and encourages any input from members.

7.2 To date, sixty people have registered for the member's only area so they can access the newsletters and minutes of Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings, the Section 106 Agreement, and the Articles of Association of The Trust.

7.3 We are looking to obtain as many members email addresses as possible so we can send updates and formal communication via email. Members were promised that there will be no junk email and that email addresses etc will not be passed on to any third parties.

7.4 We aim to send out four newsletters a year, but the number and timings will be dependent upon us having information and news to share.

7.5 We are looking at expanding the website to include areas that members can use for such things as sales and wants, notify of missing pets etc.

Members Questions to the Board

Q8- *A resident from Heartsease Way stated "Down my street there are lots of weeds which haven't been cleared for months. I have been clearing the weeds outside the front of my house. The community centre is a waste of time and will only attract yobs and vandalism. There has been graffiti on the play area and the side of the house for weeks and this still has not been cleared off. The Police officer said to me that Elsea Park is scum and that we are known as the next Woodview. The paths have not been finished down Heartsease Way and these desperately need doing. We have problems with youths hanging around the street and fifteen can gather at any one time causing anti-social behaviour*

issues. *I've had the tyres on my car slashed and been verbally abused in the street*".

A. The Directors advised that antisocial behaviour was not a Trust responsibility and that the resident needed to contact the Police and the local council on that particular issue. Dan advised he would get the graffiti cleared and would come and inspect the path area to see what work needed to be carried out.

8. Annual Accounts and Finance

Angela Bailey presented a summary of the Trusts current position stating that when the Trust was first set up it was not expected to run in surplus. Kier initially financed a loan but all this money has now been repaid by the Trust. For the last three years income has outstripped expenditure. This is largely due to delays in taking over the areas of public open space currently maintained by Kier, and the delay of the Community Centre build.

The bank balance currently stands at £118,336 after payment of VAT and provisions.

A question was raised as to why we are collecting more than we need. It was explained that the annual charge was calculated and implemented prior to The Trust being established based on a business plan that would repay the debts incurred in setting up The Trust and to build a cash reserve to meet the costs of equipping the Community Centre. The Trust also needs to ensure that it has sufficient funds to cover the future running costs as it's difficult to estimate at this stage what they will be.

Members Questions to the Board

Q 9– What was the total bill from Kier and did we pay any interest?

A – (AMB) For the first few years Kier paid all of our bills for us and then billed the Trust this amount. No interest was charged on this loan.

Q10 – Where does my £230 community charge go?

A – (AMB) A financial statement was sent out last year to all residents with a breakdown in percentage showing how the money is spent. We will ensure that this information is given each year.

Q11 – How do we know what has been transferred to the Trust?

A – At this stage nothing has been transferred to the Trust but our solicitors are in the process of transferring the first areas. Our grounds man, Peter Ellis, is currently maintaining areas that have not yet been handed over, but this work is being billed back to Kier, so costs do not fall to The Trust.

Q12 – Have some of the problems on Elsea Park been caused by the developer building all over instead of building in one place at a time?

A – (AMB) It wasn't felt that this had a financial impact on the Trust.

Q – On the future community charges you said about holding these figures, will that happen?

A13 – (AMB) It's hard to say at this stage as we have a lot of costs coming our way and wherever possible we will try to keep these costs down. With the community centre opening next we will have to see whether that will be self-sufficient through bookings, outside business etc

Q 14– (DB) We are now financing 2000 houses with only 600 homes built. Are Kier going to pay for the shortfall?

A – Nothing extra is being financed. For example, the Community Centre was due to be built once 501 houses had been completed, although provision of the Community Centre by Kier has continued to slip.

Q15 - Are we VAT registered?

A – (MU) Yes we are now VAT registered. The VAT has been back dated three years and a lump sum has now been paid to HMRC to cover arrears.

Q16 – What's happening with the Fountain Ponds?

A – (DB) A drainage company are being contracted by Kier to undertake remedial work on the two fountain ponds. They will be de-silted and cleared prior to the bird nesting season, which begins in March.

Q17 – When will the Trust take responsibility for the Fountain Ponds?

A – (BC) Kier have advised the fountain ponds will not be transferred to The Trust until all works on Elsea Park have finished. This is due to silt and other material from the building site flowing into the pond area.

Q18 – Are there any properties that haven't paid the community charge?

A – (AMB) At the moment there are roughly 20% of households that have not paid the charge. Reminders will be sent out and the Trust will be pushing hard for this money.

Q19 – Does everyone pay the same amount?

A – (AMB) Yes, regardless of the size of the property everyone pays the same amount.

Q20 – Shouldn't properties be charged on the size they are?

A – (AMB) All residents enjoy the amenities regardless of the size of the property.

Q21 – Why do "Customs and Excise" appear on the accounts as both a debt and credit?

A – (MU) This is an error and will be corrected

Q22 – Shouldn't we be showing the VAT Registration Number on all correspondence?

A – (MU) Yes – now that we are VAT Registered, all correspondence will show our VAT Registration Number.

Q23 – When did we register for VAT?

A – (MU) We registered earlier this year, with our VAT liabilities beginning when we hit the VAT registration threshold back in July 2007. This has resulted in arrears, as advised earlier in the meeting.

Q24 – Can we have a PCSO attend the next meeting?

A – Yes if members so wish and the PCSO agrees.

Q25 – Is a member able to resign from the Trust and no longer be a member?

A – (AMB) Yes; a member can resign at any time, but is still legally bound to pay the community charge every April.

Q 25- I'm concerned at the lack of play equipment in the Springbank Drive play area and the removal of some items; what is happening with this?

A – (BC) The large basket swing was removed due to anti-social behaviour issues and the park now has time restrictions in place. We are looking at how this can be addressed going forward.

9. Future Plans

9.1 It was reported to members that the Trust Office will be moving to one of the Coach Houses sometime in November or December. This is located just off the large roundabout on the junction of Tilia Way and The Pollards. It will be manned by the two new members of staff from Monday to Friday. More details of opening hours and contact numbers will be displayed when the date of the move is confirmed.

9.2 Around the time that the Community Centre is handed over, all Resident Directors will resign and an election will take place to fill the appropriate positions on the board. Any member of The Trust will be able to put themselves forward for a position on the board and a ballot will take place. The Articles of Association say that no resident director can serve for a continuous period of more than three years once the elected board has been established.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Security

10.1.1 Due to the recent anti-social behaviour issues the Trust had been asked to look at whether security can be improved on Elsea Park. Matt Upex presented the case for and against hiring a private security firm to conduct patrols on the development. The cost would be £18,000 per annum, and could be funded by The Trust.

10.1.2 Other suggestions were to part fund a PCSO to be on site and to put up CCTV cameras around the development. Some residents suggested signing up to Neighbourhood Watch and also becoming Community Crime Fighters.

10.1.3 The general consensus was that we already pay for police services through our council tax, and that it should fall to the police to provide Elsea Park with any policing that is required.

10.1.4 The motion to appoint a private security firm was taken to a vote. With only one vote in favour, and the rest against, the motion was not carried.

10.2 There was no other business.

11. Close

The Chairman thanked all present for attending and closed the meeting at 9pm.