

# **TILGATE FORUM MEETING Minutes**

**Thursday 12 July 2018 7.30 – 9.15 Shackleton Road Community Centre**

Chair: Richard Handy

The meeting was attended by 50 people in all; this number included Henry Smith MP, WSCC Councillors Duncan Crow and Michael Jones, Leader of CBC Council Peter Lamb, CBC Councillor and Mayor Carlos Castro, CBC Councillor Francis Guidera, CBC Development Officer John Dale, Manager at Tilgate Park Nick Hagon, and Manager of Tilgate Golf Course Dan Lucking.

**1. Welcome and apologies** RH welcomed all. Apologies were received from Rev. Robert Edwards. The Kemnal Academy Trust (TKAT) was invited to attend but sent a reply (read out) that “on this occasion it would not be appropriate to attend the Forum Meeting”, and recommending that individuals use the TKAT contact email and Frequently Asked Questions. TKAT also responded that Mr Gianni Bianchi has been appointed as Interim Headteacher, committed to engaging with the Thomas Bennett community, but not starting in the role until September. As previously, the meeting was recorded.

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting and Matters Arising**

**2.1** Concerning item 4 in the minutes, RH read out a request from Katrina Broadhill at Healthwatch asking that any member interested in volunteering to liaise between the Forum and Healthwatch should see him after the meeting.

**2.2** The minutes from the Forum meeting held on 17 May 2018 were accepted and are posted on the Tilgate Community Forum website.

## **3. Thomas Bennett Community College (TBCC) restructure – Alex Ramiz, National Education Union (NEU)**

AR thanked the community for taking action concerning this item. The original restructure proposal had no Head Teacher, no Sixth form and no Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-Ordinator in September 2018. There is now a changed picture. A new Head will be appointed and the interview process will involve both teachers and pupils; six teacher posts have been retained; the Sixth form will remain and two SEN teachers are retained. The process was not straightforward but parental persistence brought “very good achievements to date” in AR’s view.

One important issue emerging out of the whole experience is that of accountability. Who is it that holds TKAT to account? What form of redress is there for dissatisfied parents? There appears to be a vacuum here.

Other information was given following queries made: the NEU cannot appoint specific people to posts but can make the case for retaining/reinstating posts; also the salary rise of the TKAT Chief Executive when resources are scarce and there is financial pressure at TBCC in particular is incomprehensible, and offensive to some members. One member made a Freedom of Information request concerning this and reported that the information was refused on the basis that it was not in the public interest.

The Chair asked Crawley MP Henry Smith to respond on the lack of local control and accountability. HS kindly stood to give further information. HS contacted TKAT several months ago when the restructuring plan was first made public and also discussed the matter with the Secretary of State for Education, who called TKAT in to explain themselves. A major problem involves how the rebuilding of TBCC was funded in the early 2000s – it was achieved by way of a Private Funding Initiative (PFI) rather than direct funding. PFIs have to be repaid, so that approximately a quarter of TBCC’s revenue is

diverted to this end. Added to this, TBCC has a falling roll (the only school in Crawley with falling numbers), so that less revenue is coming in. Maintenance costs do not fall with the fall in numbers. There is a little good news – the new formula for the National Funding Formula (NFF) will ensure a 12.6% increase in revenue for 2019 – 2020. (The NFF is used to work out how much each region/school will receive for each pupil per year.) HS said that he also advised TKAT, who manage over 40 schools in the region (according to their website) and whose general bank balance appears to be OK, that they should cross-fund TBCC using funds they have accrued from other sites. HS agreed that TKAT does need to be monitored to prevent back-sliding and that he plans to be part of this.

Further information emerged from queries: Top-slicing (local authorities keeping part of the funds directed to schools) should be prevented by the new NFF. In response to a letter read out by Cllr. Peter Lamb about local authorities taking back academies, HS stated that he would be happy to speak to Louise Goldsmith, Leader of WSCC, about WSCC resuming control (and funding) of TBCC, and that this was probably the best solution. HS will also be happy to pursue individual issues regarding education – his contact details are at the end of the minutes.

Several parents present stated that they did not find TKAT easy to deal with at all and that they are still waiting to be consulted concerning proposed changes.

(Copies of TKAT's May letter to parents and FAQs were available for people to pick up.)

#### **4. Update from Tilgate Park – Nick Hagon, Park Manager**

**4.1** NH introduced Dan Lucking, Tilgate Golf Course Manager, who brought a display about a proposed 18-hole, forest-themed Adventure Golf, on part of the land leased to Glendale Golf. The land is situated at the dam end of Tilgate lake. Relevant surveys have been completed (ecological, arboreal) and CBC, owners of the land, supports the plan. DL will stay on after the meeting to discuss with those interested in more detail, but an immediate query that arose was the potential increase in traffic on the Golf course road and through Tilgate. (The suggestion to consider putting activities into other parks was also made.) Concerning parking pressures in the area, it was reported that the Golf course overflow car park will be expanded to add around 40 extra spaces.

**4.2** Concerning the park NH outlined the severe risk of fires. There have also been three incidents of arson this summer. Signage has gone up warning of the risks of cigarettes, pieces of glass. NH asked Forum members to be alert to any sign of fire when in the park and to take appropriate action. (Note: this does not mean tackle a fire yourself, but call the Fire Brigade on 999.)

**4.3** Anti-social behaviour in the park – additional ramps have been put in. NH asked for feedback on effectiveness.

#### **4.4 Activities in the park:**

- 8-9 September Dragon Boat Racing – letters will go to local residents.
- Volunteers are sought for maintenance in the Walled Garden, the Peace Garden and the Heather Garden – see below.
- Friends of Tilgate Park – volunteers needed to join the committee. AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> September.
- National Garden Scheme open evenings take place next week 18 and 19 July 6.30pm – 9.30pm in the Walled Garden. Charge of £7 on the door (cash) each evening, most of which goes to charity. Refreshments, nibbles, talk and tour.
- A Bat Walk and a Salsa night are being planned.

#### **5. Updates from local Councillors and questions**

**CC:** exploration into the possibilities of managing food waste is on-going. 30% of our waste is food. CC is holding a Brexit-linked event for Portuguese and other European

nationals looking at, for example, rights and identity. 3pm to 5pm Saturday 14 July at Broadfield Community Centre.

**DC:** DC reminded Forum members that the WSCC 2018 consultation "What Matters to You" will close on Monday 16 July.

**FG:** FG is still with us and working on residents' issues. It has become known that a resident has built a BMX track (complete with hills, concrete and a fire pit) in Tilgate Park with no authority. CBC is now pursuing this.

Antisocial behaviour continues on Tilgate Parade: young people are sitting outside the Co-Op up to midnight smoking cannabis. (Sadly there is no local youth club.)

FG has been to the main car park in Tilgate Park and observed antisocial behaviour and noise levels. Suspicious activity of various types has also been observed. Suggestion made that the car park is closed at night.

For information (for NH) a member stated that the barriers on the car park in Tilgate Park did not seem to be their advertised height as the roof of his car was scraped.

A refuse truck reversing in Shackleton Road has destroyed the footpath near the Community Centre – the driver has been reprimanded.

## **6. Any Other Business and future events**

**6.1** RH reminded members that the next meeting in September will be the Annual General Meeting and that as possibly two members of the committee will stand down at that point, more committee members are now desperately needed. Nomination forms are available to take away. If you are interested, please email the Secretary as below.

**6.2** Garden volunteer dates in Tilgate Park:

Peace Garden volunteers at 10.30am Saturdays 14th and 28th July

Heather Garden volunteers at 10am Wednesday 25th July.

(Meet at the Walled Garden Tilgate Park for both gardens.)

## **7. Raffle and Future Forum Meetings**

**7.1** A successful raffle was held. Many thanks also to those who gave donations at the hatch.

**7.2** Committee meeting:

Thursday 9 August 2018 at the Community Centre in Shackleton Road, 6.30pm.

Any Forum members who would like to attend, and those who are interested in joining the committee, will be welcome.

**7.3** Forum Meetings:

**Annual General Meeting Thursday 13 September 2018** at the Community Centre in Shackleton Road, 7.30 – 9.15pm

**Thursday 22 November 2018** – venue and time as above

Contact details:

**Tilgate Community Forum:** email: [tilgateforum@gmail.com](mailto:tilgateforum@gmail.com)

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