

# YORK ENVIRONMENT FORUM

## MINUTES OF MEETING ON Mar.11th.2013

### Present:

Philip Crowe	York Tomorrow
Isobel Waddington	Murton PC
Dot Lawton	Heslington PC
Carole Green	Bishopthorpe PC
Cllr. Andy d'Agorne	CYC Green Group
Cllr. Dave Merrett	CYC Labour Group
Richard Lane	YRAIN
John Cossham	York in Transition/York Rotters
Penny Bainbridge	Edible York
Maurice Vassie	Just York
Mick Phythian	YNET
June Tranmer	The Healing Clinic/Briar House Resources
Phil Bixby	Constructive Individuals
Anna Bialkowska	Tang Hall Community Centre/Residents Assoc.
Alastair Cooper	York Quakers(Friargate)
Barry Otley	Wheatlands Community Woodland
Ron Healey	CTC
Sara Robin	Yorks.Wildlife Trust
Tom Waring	St.Nicks.
Richard Adcock	independent
<b>Sir Ron Cooke</b>	Reinvigorate York

Chair:Kate Lock

### 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies from Guy Woolley, Chris.Chambers, Hugh Cripps, Charlotte Harrison.  
Welcome to Ron Cooke, Richard Adcock

### 2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

agreed

### 3 MATTERS ARISING

item 6- JC advised that his report on fracking should be completed for the next meeting

item 7- PB noted that CYC was to be represented at the MIPIM bonanza, hopefully to generate interest in York Central

### 4 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

There was concern over the CYC programme of hedge removal, justified as being "routine maintenance". The ground maintenance budget had been cut by £200k, and there appeared to be no alternative locations for compensation hedge planting.

A request for information on future hedge removal had been lodged. It was pointed out that this programme would have considerable ecological impacts, and that cutting back hedges to ground level would avoid maintenance costs and allow for natural regeneration.

The "York's Green Spaces" publication was being updated, with new web links. There should be greater emphasis on promoting walks in green spaces.

There had been discussions with David Raffaelli on taking forward a pilot study on green infrastructure using the G.I.Toolkit, in conjunction with CYC, with a promise of funding from the University. Despite an initial indication of support from Mike Slater (CYC) there had been no further indications of interest, and this proposal is now stalled.

Development of the "Treemendous" initiative continues, supported by local business contributions and donations of trees. Continued back-office CYC support is now in doubt, which is of some concern for its future success. The CYC policy of tree removal is not being matched by compensatory planting.

The threatened reduction in the CYC ecology team was to be deplored, and indicates the low priority given to this aspect of the CYC public responsibilities. This was in stark contrast to other local authorities. Cllr.DM stated that this would not affect the revisions to the NPPF.

In the light of the CYC cutbacks in qualified planning staff it was suggested that the EF should become a statutory consultee in the planning process. Cllr.DM thought that this was worth considering.

## **5 REINVIGORATE YORK - Sir Ron Cooke**

The aim was to provide a central area world class public realm comparable to that of Liverpool or Bruges, if the city was to compete successfully in the tourism and business investment fields. The gradual degradation of the city centre, seldom noticed by residents, needed to be halted and reversed. CYC had very little in the way of a maintenance budget, and regeneration had to be driven by a sense of utility as well as aesthetics when changes were proposed. Quality of craftsmanship was fundamental both for an initial impact and for the long term success of the programme. This required co-operation of all involved, including the utility companies, and adequate training of operatives. Over £3.5 million had been allocated for general initial refurbishment and five major site renewal projects, involving the CYC Urban Design Group, which is to issue a design manual to assist officers, businesses and private owners to co-operate in improving York city-wide, not just in the critical areas covered by the Reinvigorate York programme. The presentation was fully illustrated by examples of past mistakes.

Members' comments were:-

There were widespread litter problems along cycle tracks in particular. *This was not within the Reinvigorate York brief. Was the concept of "Green Infrastructure" fully recognised? Various "chill out" areas had been identified, where trees might have grown too large for the spaces, or were otherwise inappropriate.*

Was the "City Beautiful" report taken into account? *There was much in the report which was not practical.* The River Foss was neglected asset . Can York cope with the even greater number of tourists which the proposals aimed to attract? *Again these topics were outside the RY remit.*

The chair thanked Sir Ron on behalf of members for his illuminating address, and looked forward to further presentations as more sites were brought forward.

## **6 YORK GREEN HUB**

**KL** noted the on-going operation of a "virtual " green hub, which needed to be properly hosted and developed. This required finance. Possible St.Nicks. or York in Transition could take on this role. The purpose, content and projected outcomes needed to be defined. Links with the CYC website could be established. This is work in progress.

## **7 SOCIAL VALUE ACT**

**PC** briefly outlined the remit of this Act which "requires public authorities to have regard to economic, social and **environmental** wellbeing in connection with public service contracts". This is particularly important in the days of cost cutting, when low cost tenders do not always provide best value across the board. **AB** was already looking at this issue.

## **8 AOB**

**MV** noted suggested local political lobbying to ensure that climate change and green issues were included at the forthcoming G8 summit.

**PB** noted an "Edible Walls" event at El Piano, and a "Growing Connections" event at Friargate Meeting House .

## **9 NEXT MEETING**

Date	Mon. April 16th. 2013. 4.00-6.00pm
Venue	West Offices - George Hudson room
Agenda	tbc

## **YEF FUTURE MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

to be the first Tuesday each month

The Forum contact is c/o 66 Bishopthorpe Road, York YO23 1JS t.01904 620171 or kate @ klockworks.co.uk + [www.yorkenvironmentforum.org.uk](http://www.yorkenvironmentforum.org.uk) and on **Facebook**