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## **Appendix 1: Summary of 5 Conversations about health and wellbeing Conversations: (NB: 4-5 Conversations were required by our agreement with ECC)**

### **Sample Questions:**

- What do you like about living in Newtown?
- What activities do you enjoy? (Who, where, when?)
- What obstacles or barriers prevent/discourage people being active?
- What are your ideas to encourage and support people to be more active and healthy? How can we help people feel wanted and welcome?
- How would you like to be involved in helping create a happy, healthy and active Newtown? (For example: Help organise or lead an activity that you enjoy? Do you skills and experience you'd like to offer?)

### **Free Moovement, 18<sup>th</sup> September**

#### *Free exercise class*

Free Moovement began when Paul Mouland had the idea of inviting neighbours to join him when exercising in Barton Fields. It has become a very successful city-wide project with seven sessions a week in six locations around the city. It uses the flexible YMCA level 2 Fitness Instructors programme to train more instructors.

Paul spent half an hour talking to us about the origin and development of Free Moovement while the class was being led by another instructor. Afterwards 10 people in the class were eager to talk to us about what they like about Free Moovement:

- It's not sporty – it's more of an activity than exercise
- It's sociable... it gets people together... creates community
- It's fun... I hate exercise but this is different
- I don't have to commit
- It's free
- Not competitive, no judgement
- Kids are welcome
- If I wasn't doing this, I wouldn't do anything all week. Tuesdays are always a hard day at work for me, but I still feel like this is what I want to do even though I'm tired. I can join in at whatever level is comfortable for me – You can just do what's best for yourself
- I have gone down a dress size since I started coming and I like feeling good in my clothes... I can feel the health benefits
- I always come even if I don't feel like it because Chris (the instructor) comes voluntarily and I don't want to let him down... it's a community thing  
I sometimes come groaning but I always leave smiling

Paul Mouland has also developed a leadership training programme for "Community Activators" in partnership with YMCA. See 'Recommendations' in the last section of this report for how this could play a key role in engaging residents

### **John Hannam House, 10<sup>th</sup> September**

John Hannam House is sheltered housing for people with a wide range of physical and cognitive disabilities. We had a conversation with 5 residents who were enthusiastic about becoming more active.

#### **Wish List of Activities**

- Croquet, Giant Games (such as jigsaw puzzles, chess, four-in-a-row, croquet)
- Karaoke, Wheelchair Disco

- Tasting Healthy Food,
- Quiz, Stories, Arts and crafts
- Visits from therapy dogs
- Fundraising for improving outdoor area with shade

## **Celebration of Humanity in Belmont Park, 29<sup>th</sup> Sept**

### *Festive event celebrating diversity*

We had a table with flyers about the Community Conversation on October 9th and were invited to make an announcement from the stage. We handed out 50 flyers and had informal conversations with approximately 20 people. There were constant performances and speeches with amplification from the stage so we were unable to have many in-depth conversations about the issues.

- One man was enthusiastic about his experience with “Walking 4 Health” in Exminster. The walks were often circular with various shortcuts available, with routes last from 10- 90 minutes. This programme was cut through lack of funding and he bitterly regretted this as a retrograde step for the people involved. He wondered whether this could be re-established on a voluntary basis.
- A few people were concerned about the lack of participation of some minority groups in social and physical activities. We discussed ways that people could help newcomers feel warmly welcomed when they attend events. For example, appoint someone as a ‘Greeter’ to smile and say hello as people arrive, and perhaps introduce them to one other person. That person could connect with them at end of meeting and invite them to come back again.
- We personally invited many people from diverse backgrounds to the Community Conversation on October 9th and several attended as a result.

## **Elders Lunch, 2<sup>nd</sup> October**

### *Free activities and sit-down lunch at Belmont Chapel*

Each Tuesday Belmont Chapel offer a morning of activities for elders. This is followed by lunch served at tables of 5-8 people, with attractive table cloths, nice tableware and fresh flowers in the centre of each table. Food is served by friendly servers at a buffet table with choice of 3 hot entrees, salads, several vegetables choice of puddings. There were approximately 50 people and we each moved from table to table to hear people’s thoughts.

### **Favourite activities**

Activities they said they already do or would like to do:

Indoor bowling, keep fit classes, table tennis, social gatherings or lunch clubs, book clubs, community singing, ballroom dancing, craft days and picnics in the park.

## **Barriers to Activity**

### **Safety and Mobility Issues**

Many of the attendees were concerned about feeling vulnerable on the streets of the city. This was especially true for those with limited mobility and fear of losing their balance.

- “People cycle on pavements, especially on the High St and Sidwell St weaving among pedestrians, sometimes at speed.”
- ”Skateboarders seem oblivious of the anxiety they cause elderly and disabled people.”
- “Many people are engrossed in their mobile phones and not looking where they are going. For people who may feel afraid of being knocked into and losing their balance, this can be anxiety provoking.”

- “Some pavements in Newtown have been renewed and they are great, but there is no ramp in some places! And there are many places in Newtown that still have uneven pavements. I use a walker and this means I can’t attend many things I would like to attend.”
- “Crossing the road is hazardous because speed limits are not observed by most drivers, especially in 20mph zones. Not all crossings are maintained in working order.”
- Several people mentioned fear of rough sleepers, who often have alcohol and drug issues. They were concerned that the elderly can be seen as an easy target for intimidation and mugging by people who are begging and congregating in groups. Many of them were concerned about the cuts to the Police, which mean there is a reduced presence of police on the ground in the city centre.

### **Strategies for encouraging/supporting greater activity**

- “A personal invitation is always best.”
- “You need to invite people and give them ‘A key to the door’. For example: Let people know they are wanted and needed. Tell them the event will be better if they come.”
- “Offer to go with them, especially the first time.”
- “Offer to lead an activity that you enjoy doing and would enjoy doing with others.” (One woman spontaneously offered to teach First Aid and lead a craft morning)
- “People could use their bus pass to go to Chagford, Christow, etc. Either stay on the bus to turn around and come back. Or find out when the next bus is leaving, take a walk around, and take the next bus home. Either way you see the countryside. You can also invite a friend who doesn’t get out much.”
- “Invite a friend or group of friends to walk to the library. Or take the bus to the library. Go for a book, or a coffee or an event. Or just to have an outing.”

### **Coffee Morning at Eaton House, 8<sup>th</sup> October**

*Over-55s housing. 68 flats. Built in 1984.*

The conversation among 9 residents was informative, insightful, high-spirited, humorous, serious and delightful. Participants included a psychiatric nurse retired after 40 years; a care worker for children with learning difficulties; a woman who worked in MOD army camps who laughed a lot about her unrepeatable stories of scrapes and high jinx; and a female retired computer programmer who created geographic data bases and designed software for a global research institute on marine biodiversity, aquaculture and food systems – she also boxed weekly at Hard Knocks Amateur Boxing club!

### **Favourite activities they do regularly**

Singing group, bingo, activities with students who come once a week (bowls, skittles, quizzes, armchair fitness and going out for meal).

The Macmillan Coffee morning once a year is also a highlight.

### **Wish list**

A few people would like to do local history walks around Exeter. “The ‘Strollers’ meet at St Leonards group practice on Tuesday mornings, but there’s no information about local history – just walk and chat.”

### **Obstacles**

The main issues are social isolation, safety and accessibility, disproportion number of students in vicinity and cost of activities

### **Social Isolation**

- “The warden used to bring new people to an activity, introduce them to all of us and encourage them to attend. Now it’s nobody’s job to do this and new people don’t join in”.
- “We don’t know our neighbours any more. Even when an ambulance comes, we have no idea who they are coming to see”.
- “Communication with staff is less than it used to be.”
- “We’d like to do more activities, but whenever we organize anything only the same 6 or 8 people come”.

### **Safety and Mobility issues**

- “Sometimes rough sleepers come inside to sleep in our corridors. They get in the door behind residents because the doors are slow to close. Once someone gets in the house, they open the fire doors for others to come inside. Now there are security men who come through 3 times a night to make sure no rough sleepers have come into the building.”
- “We feel surrounded by large blocks of student housing. They do not feel integrated into this neighbourhood and many aspects of having so many students are intimidating to us, especially after dark. We don’t experience most students as being respectful, considerate or interested in us.”
- “Students congregate in large groups and we feel intimidated. Large groups block the street and doors of shops”
- “People in the street don’t make allowance for old people feeling vulnerable - not even if they are in a wheelchair”.
- “I don’t like going out at night. I don’t feel safe”
- “To get to the Hut in Belmont Park you have to cross the Triangle Car park, go past 2 pubs. Then the pavement is narrow. Walking through park to the Hut is dark and no one around. Altogether it doesn’t feel safe”.
- “Crossing the road by the Vue cinema is awful.”

### **Affordability**

The only man present had been confined to a wheel chair for many years. He was a keen supporter of football and followed local politics and planning issues. He was sad that he could no longer afford to attend football matches at the Exeter City Ground for financial reasons, despite having attended matches for many years.

### **Overcoming obstacles**

- “It would be great to have a Warden again so that we could get to know new people and they would join in different activities”.
- “We need People’s Choice candidate not just Labour or Conservative. Need to break the mould”.
- “Councillor Richard Branston listened – he’s very good and comes to see us – he sees us as individuals”.
- “When people block doorways in town, I just push my shopping trolley with my elbows out and swear at them in Welsh”.

## Appendix 2: Conversations mainly concerning Clifton Hill

### Newtown Community Conversation, 9<sup>th</sup> October

Open meeting, St Matthew's Church Hall

The format of the meeting was based on the 'World Café' model: groups of 5-8 people seated around tables discussing selected topics with each other. There were sheets of flipchart paper and coloured pens on each table to record everyone's ideas. A total of 79 people attended (seated at 15 tables), plus 3 Newtown City Councillors, 1 Devon County Councillor, 3 ECC staff and 2 Active Devon staff.

As a stimulus to conversation, we put posters on the walls that mapped the results of conversations we'd already had with diverse groups of people in Newtown. There were also photographs that showed various types of physical activities, including sports, exercise, games, play equipment, free play in nature and other group activities.

The overarching question for the Community Conversation was "***How Can We Improve Health and Wellbeing of People in Newtown?***" The Agenda listed broad topics within that question that could be divided among the tables. Participants could self-select the topic for their table.

- What activities do people enjoy doing?
- What assets do we have? What would we like to create?
- What barriers and losses are we concerned about?
- How can we encourage more participation?

After an impassioned discussion about the need to focus primarily on the decision to close the Clifton Hill Sports Centre and to sell the site for private development, all of the tables chose to discuss issues regarding that decision. ECC staff and Councillors played an important role by spending time listening thoughtfully to people at individual tables: answering questions, clarifying issues about the closure of the Leisure Centre from the Council's point of view, and recording the views of people who came primarily to discuss other topics such as social isolation, litter, and mobility and safety issues.

### Summary of contributions from participants

It was impossible to have a full report from each table within the timeframe of the meeting. Instead we asked each table to appoint a spokesperson to describe a particular aspect of the topic that mattered deeply to people in their group:

### Loss of access to 'natural' green space is detrimental to physical and mental health

- "Ample ***research***, as well as our own experience, shows that exposure to nature is vital for our physical and mental wellbeing."
- "***Children benefit greatly*** from playing in natural areas (and not just in well-manicured parks with manufactured play equipment)."
- "***We all need wild (or at least unkempt and truly natural) places*** for enjoyment, contemplation, wonder, nourishment of our senses, relief from stress, depression and fears, comfort in sorrow, the joy of connection with other species and emotional/cognitive relief from an overwhelmingly linear urban and electronic world. We all need natural spaces for fresh air and peace of mind. ***Green space lost cannot be regained.***"

## Community Cohesion and Diversity

- “Community **cohesion** is a challenge in Newtown with such a high proportion of transient students that can overwhelm the sense of continuity and connection.”
- “The strength of Newtown is the **diversity** of the community. We don’t want to become a luxury housing and student enclave. A multi-use indoor space and the Green Space can facilitate people from different backgrounds and cultures to encounter each other in a context that facilitates easy contact through a shared activity.”
- “The Leisure Centre and Green Space have been assets that significantly enhance **opportunities for neighbours and families to meet for social and physical activities.**”
- This is an also opportunity for our community to **come together as active participants** in the enhancement and stewardship of this public Green Space for the benefit all. It could be a **great community project.**

## Air quality

- “Many of our heavily-populated **streets have no trees**, many others have very few trees. **Most residents have no gardens.**
- “We are surrounded by roads with heavy traffic and **we have only two green space ‘lungs’.**” Trees and plants are vital to reduce air pollution (and for many other reasons).”
- “**We need to take into account connections between different issues such as traffic, air pollution and green space.** Further development will also exacerbate these issues.”

## Biodiversity

- One Newtown resident has counted **78 species of plants** in the Green Space. (Appendix 4) He said he had sent a letter to the Council and has received no response or acknowledgment.
- Another resident and husband have counted **30 species of birds.** The Green Spaces is also habitat and **wildlife corridor** for foxes, squirrels, rabbits, hedgehogs, badgers, insects and other species not yet identified. These valuable species and habitats should be enhanced not destroyed.
- “It takes **decades to grow a mature tree. Don’t destroy what we cannot replace.**”

## Loss of multi-use indoor space

- “The Clifton Hill Sports Centre was **not just a facility for exercise and sport for members.** Many Newtown residents could not afford the membership, so they used the Leisure centre on a pay-as-you-go basis. It seems that these users were not included in the count of how much the Centre was used.”
- “The Sports Centre also served a **social function** for families who brought children to toddler’s keep-fit and Gym Joeys, as a place for children’s birthday parties and other family gatherings. Family and friends played badminton, five-a-side, table tennis and squash. **It was a place to use with people you know and to meet new people.**”
- “**A fit-for-purpose indoor space is needed** for exercise for people of all ages and abilities, dance groups, board games, arts and crafts, discos, holiday clubs We also need a large sports hall catering to all ages (for example, walking football for older people)”
- “**We need a multi-use indoor space to replace what has been lost: the social as well as physical wellbeing of our community.** The new Belmont

Hut will not fulfil all these needs. Neither will St Sidwells Point, which doesn't yet exist."

### **Lack of democratic consultation**

- "Feels like a sham. Why did council not consult with us before decision was taken? . People feel very strongly about this. We have local expertise and knowledge. The decision was not properly taken."
- "The Councillors were not informed enough."
- "Something is being stolen from us. Loss of public ownership will not be forgotten."
- "The Council needs to win back our trust."
- "We as a community want to be forward-thinking. We want to make the best of our future."

### **1. Lack of consultation and transparency**

The conversations took place in the context of the anger and acute sense of loss that hundreds of Newtown residents have expressed about the perceived lack of consultation and transparency prior to the decision not to repair the Sports Centre and to sell the site.

### **2. Pollution, congestion and loss of green space**

Based on our conversations with residents, Councillors, and the conversations and reports of Newtown's Community Builder, some Newtown residents have concerns about air pollution and loss of green space.

### **3. Role of Sports Centre as 'social glue'**

It became apparent in the course of our conversations with local residents that the Sports Centre was much more than a gym or sports centre and for some people it played an important role in the life of the community.

They valued the Sports Centre for the 'social glue' that bonded the community via the mix of physical training, sports and informal social activities such as children's parties, Chinese dance and a range of other events and gatherings.

Several residents made the point that there will not be space available for these informal activities at St. Sidwell's Point. Even if other venues are found for some of them, some residents felt that that they will not lead to the social connectivity and cohesion that occurs when there is a central multi-use community site with some areas that don't have to be pre-booked. (Belmont Hut, St. Matthews Church Hall, Guinness Housing meeting spaces, etc).

### **Level of local usage of Sports Centre**

Several people pointed out that the number of Newtown residents that paid for membership did not accurately reflect the high level of usage by Newtown residents who participated in 'pay-as-you-go' classes and relied on the Centre for casual sports and social activities.

### **Newtown Primary School drop off and pickup**

*September 18<sup>th</sup> and October 10<sup>th</sup>*

Many parents were not able to attend the Community Conversation on 9<sup>th</sup> October, so we went to Newtown Primary School to speak with parents coming to collect children after school. We set up a table with large sheets of paper and marking pens, and some display boards of photographs. We also took notes on what parents and children said. About 20 parents and 30+ children participated in giving their ideas about the Clifton Hill Greenspace.



**Record of verbal and written comments:**

**Children said:**

- Climbing, balancing, stepping stones, logs, rolling in leaves, picking blackberries
- Making dens; (10+ kids and some adults); playing with mud (8+ kids and 2 adults); using natural materials to make things (10+ kids and several adults), building with rocks (5+ kids); being around nature and wildlife (10+ kids and many adults)
- Have an extra muddy kitchen, make a playground, fly kites, plant an orchard, have a football pitch, sledging (in snow), tents, swimming, fire circle
- Keep the trees. Don't build on our green spaces.

**Adults said:**

- Don't spray harmful pesticides and weed-killers
- Have car-free days so we can breathe clean air.
- Keep current community assets & don't sell to private companies
- Natural play spaces using wood etc; playing around in forest
- Areas for kids to play, including outdoor keep-fit / sports for kids
- Some sheltered area to meet/play on rainy days
- Communal picnics/Barbecue/world foods)
- Neighbourhood walks
- Wildlife spotting (wildlife talks)
- Music sessions/open mic (acoustic).
- Community fruit and nut trees, herb gardens, community allotments

## **Appendix 3: Community Builder's Report**

### **What do people love?**

Newtown is a mixed community with families; older people; students and single people living there. Residents view it as being multicultural. There are a number of artists and a number of musicians within its residents. Although Newtown is a deprived area there also a number of professionals residing there. Convenience to the city centre and local amenities are stated by most. The majority of residents listened to state that they like living in Newtown because it has a community feel and is described by some as 'the village in the city'. Many people say that it is quiet and that they feel safe living there. Belmont Park is very much valued. The diversity of the area is seen as positive. The Respect Festival is often quoted as something that people love. In terms of physical activity, swimming; walking; running/jogging and mat exercises (e.g. yoga) are the most quoted. A number of people enjoy gardening or have allotments. St Matthews Church carried out a consultation late last year on what type of activities people would like to see so it is worthwhile speaking to them.

### **What concerns do people have?**

The main responses are litter; drug dealing and consumption, drinking and the increasingly transient nature of the area through rentals and student lets and blocks. Some residents have suggested that too many vulnerable people with addiction issues are being housed in the area.

Since the closure of Clifton Hill Sports Centre people have commented on the loss to the area and some are feeling that it was undemocratic of the council to close the centre for good without consulting users. A number of people feel that Pyramids Swimming Pool is outdated and doesn't feel clean so choose to use other pools where they can.

A small number of people in both Newtown and St Leonards are concerned about cycling on pavements.

### **Belmont Park**

The park is a very important asset in Newtown. It has two play areas including a fenced off green space for children to play safely; table tennis table; basketball court; outdoor exercise equipment and a graffiti wall (which can be used for ball games). The park is used by people from all walks of life and people can be found walking dogs; playing football and other ball games; badminton; playing instruments; having a picnic and just relaxing on the grass. Ethnic minority/religious groups often meet up for picnics. There are raised beds next to the hut where people can plant herbs and a sensory garden. Trees are often used to tie exercise equipment to and slack lines and a rope swing, which was most likely put up by a park user, has proved to be very popular.

Dog faeces, litter, drug taking and anti-social behaviour, the latter particularly in the sensory garden, are seen as issues. A few people have commented on the lack of lighting on an evening. Lack of toilet facilities is often raised but the issues of having public facilities is also acknowledged.

The Newtown Community Association provide a hut for community use. This can be rented at a low cost - £6/7 hour and is very well used with activities including Woodcraft Folk; Yoga; choir; Pilates; Tango; cultural groups and NCA events including their social café. A new hut is being built in September but the old hut will not be demolished until the new hut has been completed. The swings will be removed to allow for works access.

Friends of Belmont Park have carried out a consultation and are currently looking for quotations from play equipment suppliers. A listening in the park found that some parents would like somewhere to purchase refreshments after school. Some have mentioned the Play Rangers that used to work in the park and how they would love to see them return.

Annual events include The Respect Festival, Playday in the Park (not held this year due to changing remit from the children's centre – we don't know what will happen next year). The 'You Are welcome' picnic organised by a local resident in response to Brexit (friends were feeling unwelcome) has been held twice and attracted people from all over Exeter and beyond.

Other events have included The NCA 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 10 mile Community Feast held in partnership with Transition Exeter, Shillingford Organics, Exeter Pound, Love Local Food and Exeter Cookery School. This included a set of 3 plays and a bring and share community lunch. June Tunes was a collaboration between the school and Newtown Community Association Choir.

Devon Development Education ran Food Glorious Food in the area last year and worked with the school, the social café and the pre-school to make food and plant herbs.

The Free Moovement session runs every Tuesday evening, it is a free volunteer led exercise group for all ages and abilities. This has been attracting, on average, 10 people per evening.

The Toy library runs from the Scrapstore twice a week.

Tree felling is stated as a concern by many residents either in listenings or just in passing. Whilst there is undoubtedly a good reason for removing a tree, there needs to be better communication with residents as to why this is happening.

### **Physical Activity in the area**

Running, walking and swimming are the most quoted activities. There are lots of sporting and leisure physical opportunities but with very few exceptions these can be in the range of £5 per session and up although there is the X Card for people on lower income. Local activities include dance classes; yoga; qigong; pilates; water polo; volley ball; korfbal; martial arts; hockey; gym; gymnastics; skiing; driving range; strollers group; Age UK sessions; Couch to 5K groups and many more. The school also has after school clubs for its pupils. Over at Wonford Sports Centre there is walking football and tea dances for older people. With Exeter being a compact city many people travel down to the river and across the city to partake in sporting activities. Some residents take part in water sports and use the climbing wall down at the quay. There are some opportunities for free activities such as Free Moovement groups; walking groups; running groups and free tennis (Heavitree Park). One resident said that she'd like to be part of a ladies only exercise group. It is difficult to know what's going on, lack of noticeboards and information is rarely in one place.

### **Netball**

Last year a group of ladies got together wanting to play social netball. We approached Active Devon looking for some help to find a coach. They referred us to Netball England but we were unable to find a coach that was available and it was also difficult to find a sports hall in the area that was available at a time that suited us. Clifton Hill Sports Centre had no availability before 9pm, the only court available was

Magdalen Court School. People wanted to play in the area so we could walk to the group and not pay bus fare.

### **Older People**

Some say they don't feel safe going out at night. Exeter City Council fund activities in ECC run sheltered accommodation but there is currently no funding at other accommodation. Many people in sheltered accommodation say that they don't know their neighbours. At Eaton House residents are raising funds for outdoor furniture to encourage residents to come outside and interact (they are aware of available funding). At Faraday House a resident said that up until six years ago people used to use the outside area. At sheltered accommodation with a warden/living advisor people feel that new residents are not being introduced as they used to. There are some residents though with good organisations skills who would be able to do this. Some older people say that they are unaware of what's going on, some sheltered accommodation has noticeboards but not all. Grendon Road has a high proportion of vulnerable/older people. Some older people do have use of the internet. Age UK defines Newtown as a high risk for loneliness in the over 65's. Feedback from a small number of older people is that they don't feel listened to and are disconnected from the young.

### **Ways of spreading the word**

There are windows in Clifton Road that will display posters for local events

Noticeboard – Belmont Park

Friends of Belmont Park FB page

School intranet and newsletter (possibly)

NCA newsletter, website, FB page

Barnfield Hill – posters

St Leonards Surgery – posters or via FB page

Eaton House – poster

Cleveland Court – poster

Faraday House – poster

Possibly Housing Officer

### **Local Organisations**

Newtown Community Association

Newtown Primary School

Newtown Pre-school

Friends of Belmont Park

Sandford Walk Residents Group

Clifton Hill Green Space (campaigning group) – they have collected ideas from people on how they'd like to use the green space

Globe Pub

Clifton Inn

Churches – St Matthews Church and Belmont Church attract worshippers from across the city, Grosvenor Church, Mosque, Sikh Temple (house in Newtown).

Scrapstore / Toy Library – although used by local people these also attract people from further afield

### **Venues**

St Matthews Church Hall

The hut

The Globe Pub

The Clifton Inn

### **Resident Groups**

Sandford Walk  
Clifton Hill Green Space Group

### **Other Community Events**

A litter pick was held in May 2018 in response to the number of people saying that litter is an issue. This was organised by the church.

History walk – This was led by a local resident and ISCA history society.

Bread making – A community event was held in January attended by the Community Builder, Newtown Preschool, Newtown Community Association and EDP. Most of those attending were either connected to these organisations or residents that the community builder had spoken to. Better promotion is needed should a similar event take place.

### **Historical Community Action/Events**

Portland Planters – people in Portland St planted flower boxes outside their homes.

There is a FB page about this.

April 2017 – pop up open air cinema.

NCA used to run table top swaps and café in the hut.

Newtown Community Food Festival has been mentioned by a few residents, it is no longer running.

There used to be a community art group in Newtown which lost its funding. This was used by local residents and those that attended, including some vulnerable people, were upset.

## **Appendix 4: 8 written responses to Community Conversation about Clifton Hill (names redacted)**

### **Correspondent 1.**

Sorry I have been so busy and I am again tomorrow so here are a few insights: The Clifton Hill Sports Centre was very important to all ages over the years from toddlers sessions for keep fit, Gym Joeys to sessions for adults to do. Plus family and friends groups playing badminton and five a side. Playing table tennis and squash. As well as the gym equipment. It got used by people in different ways depending on the circumstances as life and families change with time. Many memories have been made there and to people those are important so maybe something should be done to preserve and celebrate those memories. A place to use with people you know and to meet new people.

The main part of what people will miss, losing the sports centre they say, is its close proximity to the community of Newtown as it was so easy to access. I understand that studies show that if facilities are close then more people are likely to use them. People want to be able to walk to where they do physical activity and not have to drive or catch a bus as this costs more for many on low income. It also increases the air pollution. Plus many people who live in the centre do not have cars and many cannot drive. I know that ECC plan a new swimming pool and gyms at Sidwell Point but there will be no hall there. It is also going to be for the whole city and shoppers not just locals...

There are going to be, and are already, Free Movement sessions and other free to access activities encouraged e.g. in the park, but we will in the winter and wet months need somewhere large enough that is warm and dry inside to do such activities. Although the officers at ECC say this can be provided at schools and colleges, these establishments use their halls a lot and getting access is not as easy as officers suggest, especially when they are full of tables for exams in the summer. They have also been very expensive to hire and community use was not encouraged in the past due to PFI and the companies protecting their buildings from being overused so this kept costs down from wear and tear.

I feel a hall or building of some sort in Newtown is needed for multiuse. We recently also lost Moosehall in Newtown which has closed and was used by community for fun events. Both Belmont Hut and St Matthews Hall are very busy and we need more large covered space for community use for dancing and having fun doing exercise and celebrating life plus to reduce social isolation.

The green spaces in the city are very important too for the mental health of so many people in the city centre, which includes Newtown. It is only now it is threatened with being built on that ECC will appreciate how important it is to people. It has always been important.

Whenever NCA organises events in the park we have anything from 50 to 500 local people who attend. We are a friendly community and we make use of our facilities. With the community builders etc. to improve Wellbeing for everyone we need more community space, not less.

I do not believe the figures that were given for use of the Clifton Hill Sports Centre were accurate as there were so many people who used it because it was inexpensive and used it often but not regularly so did not want to be members. Also membership was too expensive for many on low income. There are enough people that would

support another hall or large space for community use.

The historic bricks office is also valuable and needed. We need to remember our history so please protect this. Many residents have said to me they want it preserved. Maybe it could become a café or public building that would encourage use of green space. Activities that involve locals to reduce isolation, support those memories of those with dementia, get those who stay indoors to come out and help to maintain and garden or have fun in a green space if designed to be used that way. Shared space. Newtown primary needs a larger sports pitch to use. Could there be one that they and community use? They have to travel elsewhere to do their sports days. Outdoor badminton. Indoor badminton, a good sport for all ages. Somewhere for teenagers to meet and play games or support others by developing something for community to use as well as themselves.... Have you asked them what they want?

It is important to listen to community and to appreciate the support we all give each other in Newtown. We do not want to lose what we have because we treasure it and use it all. Please listen to everyone.

The anger you experienced at St Matthews Hall was because people think they are not listened to. To impose ECC decisions on people without consultation is not what helps to build community. We have such pockets of deprivation in Newtown which many councilors outside our ward do not realise and a green space is free to visit and if more could be made of it for wellbeing then this will help many people here. So many flats and homes do not have gardens. Those that do they are tiny and some only courtyards.

It would be good to talk to all the councilors and officers that do not know the community, not just those that cover Newtown and explain what is being done to Newtown by allowing huge numbers of student accommodation to be built in our midst. It is not the fault of students but the increase in numbers reduces the families in the neighbourhood that used to support their neighbours. The noise they make that keeps young and old awake at night. It takes a lot of effort to build communities and that is what we have here. Locals want to protect it.

Exeter is made up of areas that think of themselves as villages: such as St Thomas, Whipton, Beacon Heath, St Leonards, Polsloe, Heavitree, Wonford, Newtown, St James etc.... All these areas need green spaces and support to keep their identity. For this we need green spaces and facilities for this local community not just the whole city to use.

The council needs to think city wide but also to think of smaller local areas. The isolated person with poor health, the isolated person who has no friends nearby, the elderly people who like to get involved but have no transport, and so need local facilities and activities they can access, walk to, in every part of our city. Let's support them all. Many of the people who use Belmont Hut walk there.

We know the sports centre is going. We know that the council wants to build more houses and has to within the city limits. The local community knows that people need homes and this is welcomed but we cannot destroy what is important for good health and wellbeing and cover it with houses otherwise the new people with the new homes will also not have what is needed for good health near where they live.

Thank you for doing the consultation, let's hope it is considered and listened to in a way that means the community know they are being supported. Then they will engage and do more voluntarily to support the improvement of their local area.

On a personal level: I benefit hugely from the wildlife in Newtown and the green areas. I have seen so much and appreciate it all that to lose or reduce it would be a resource wasted. In Newtown many species of birds (over 30), the foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, frogs, and toads, many plants and trees, insects such as butterflies and watching the ladybird larvae hatch and the swifts fly overhead in the day and the bats in the evenings. This plus the activities I did at the sports centre helped me when I battled with cancer and could not walk far when I was ill. Also stress levels reduce when you have this within a short distance from where you live. All residents in Exeter should have all this to support their health and wellbeing. As a biologist I know that if you reduce the areas of green too much they do not support as much wildlife. That would be a pity when the ECC are trying to improve the environment of Exeter for the future generations.

Strong communities build better futures. The council does not have to do it all on their own... but to support communities to help.

### **Correspondent 2.**

First of all, it has been a real pleasure meeting you and I am delighted the City Council have tasked you with creating community conversations with Newtown, with a view to hopefully being able to attract some Sport England funding to the area. I really appreciated our walk around the green space behind Clifton Hill Sports Centre, and really hope that we can see some of what we talked about – reimagined green / wild space for community benefit – in conjunction with Sport England funding.

So, here are my thoughts. I hope they are not too jumbled and you can make use of them in your report.

Prior to the meeting I was very hopeful that the discussions would be accessible to all, not just people who have the confidence to present their ideas most eloquently. As we already knew was the situation, we have a lot of residents unhappy about the decisions made by the City Council, in particular over the future of the Clifton Hill site. There was a point in the meeting that I feared we would not achieve what we had set out to achieve, which was to hear from all sectors of the community about not only what they want for the Clifton Hill Green space, but for the community as a whole. However, thanks to the efforts of a number of Council staff / Councillors I feel we were able to acknowledge people's concerns while discussing their hopes for improving health and wellbeing in the ward.

The key negative things that were prominent and keenly felt by the local residents – difficult to hear but important to inform the progress from this point forward:

- The shock that the City Council would sell off public land for development – assets that we can never get back.
- The feared loss of green space and a place to enjoy wildlife in its habitat, and for wildlife to be left to roam freely
- The loss felt for the Clifton Hill Sports Centre itself – there was definite sense that this could and should have been saved – in particular a lady on my table with surveying expertise felt there should have been an external report done on the viability of the sports centre and its demise.
- That the new St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre – apart from being too far in the future to help in the short term - does not fill the gap left by the loss of the sports centre – squash course / sports hall facilities / community sports
- The anger felt by some because of the lack of consultation prior to the decision being made to put the Clifton Hill site up for development. It may be



true that the Council are not obligated to consult, but it has done real damage to the relationship between community and Council.

- The lack of response from the City Council to hear the community's complaints. They feel their concerns are being ignored, – despite local ward councillors' best efforts to respond to people's concerns and keep them up to date.
- Some people just wanted to discuss the Clifton Hill site and not the wider needs of the community.
- There are some very real issues faced by this city centre ward: high levels of deprivation and social isolation / anti-social behaviour / loss of facilities / under-funded school etc.

Positives / important outcomes from the event:

- People in Newtown care passionately about: local people / supporting each other / trees and green spaces / preserving wildlife habitats – especially foxes and a wide variety of bird species / improving accessibility / reducing social isolation
- I was extremely impressed by the well-considered and heartfelt responses to the questions being asked of the groups. This was helped, I feel sure, by some of the conversations you have already been having in the local community, including at the local primary school and older people's residences.
- The format of the event meant that real conversations could be had and so more than one opinion came to the fore.
- There is a real sense that the Newtown community has its heart in the green spaces and the health and wellbeing benefits that can be gained by both maintaining but also enhancing these communal spaces.
- It was really important that Devon and City Council staff, local councillors and Community Builder, were there to not only hear the conversations, but in some cases clear up misunderstandings, and facilitate open and honest conversations. Although some members of the community would have preferred the most senior Council officers / Members of the Council to attend, I think that would have changed the tone of the meeting again.
- A real sense of community coming from both the attendees and the people who wanted to contribute but were not able to make it.
- One of the important things to come out of the event was the people who enjoyed use of the sports centre most are people who will be put off by the additional travel to other leisure facilities – and that there were fond memories from times at the Clifton Hill Sports Centre.
- It gave local councillors the chance to hear the conversations going on, but also clarify the current state-of-play and also show their support for the community and to show that we are listening.
- Both x and x did a fantastic job of setting out the parameters of what they were hoping to achieve from the session, but also accurately summarising what people had been saying.
- On my table, the question was asked about student accommodation, and I was able to reassure that it had been agreed at Full Council that there would be no student accommodation as part of the development.
- It was clear that although there are some core common themes, not everyone at the event had the same ideas and it was great to listen to each other's concerns but also ideas on how to combat local challenges.

I think that is all I can come up with for now. I hope it helps to inform your report and I look forward to seeing what can be achieved to help regain the trust of the local community.

### **Correspondent 3**

Thank you for your email and thanks again for your work running the community event last week. I'm sorry for the delay in coming back to you. I'm not sure what more I would add to what I expect you have already put together from the feedback at the event. However, I would say that the following was the overriding sense I took away from me:

Real anger and a sense of loss about the closure of Clifton Hill without local consultation and with great rapidity. Something has been stolen from them. With this goes a genuinely felt, if misplaced distrust of the Council's intentions, in some cases a disbelief of the reasons and information released about the extent of the damage to the building. They don't think they've been told the truth - the purdah period, the snowfall, the consultation, are covering up something more sinister. Government cuts are broadly understood but are not really connecting as a direct reason for the decision. St Sidwells Point meets with cynicism and arguments that it is simply not a like for like replacement, is in the wrong place and not really belonging to Newtown. Why can't the decision to close CH be reversed, they don't buy that this is anything but a blow to health and wellbeing and against stated aims to improve fitness in the city.

Some expressed shock that a Labour council would look to sell its assets/public land and real fear and distrust about the future protection of green space. There was also unhappiness and distrust of the nature of this consultation. There is a conflation of issues which is understandable, but most people present did not separate the closure of the leisure centre, the protection of green space and the future development of the site, despite our best endeavours to explain reasons and process, and assure people that their views would be listened to.

I think expectations will be low of the outcome of the consultation. Also, residents need to know that this (one event) is not the end of it. When discussions did turn to thoughts on the site space and wider issues of health and wellbeing in Newtown, there were good suggestions about a space for children, play, recreation, natural habitat, the vital important of a space that was different from created public space like Belmont Park - a lung in the city centre, helping against air pollution, preserving trees, a space for schools, pre-schools, families - a community space.

### **Correspondent 4**

I've written my reflections below – all very headline and taken from my notes on the evening:

#### **Summary**

There was a significant turn out for the event with near 100 people arriving at St Matthew's Hall for a 2 hour engagement session. The session began with some strong voices and anger regarding the closure of Clifton Hill and the public response to the future sale of the site. After 20 minutes, and an excellent intervention by Cllr M Vizard drawing a line in the sand, we were able to move forward with some table conversations. This enabled all participants to contribute, table their views and note down the key points pertinent to them. We had to reiterate this was a listening exercise contributing towards the future of Newton, the Clifton Hill site and also an opportunity to gather some local insight for our aspirations through the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot.

I heard anger, challenge and frustration around:

- A perceived rushed decision by the council, poorly communicated and without the opportunity for residents and communities to consult on the decision
- The removal of a community facility on the doorstep of Newtown residents
- The loss of formal indoor sports provision
- The potential loss of publically owned land
- The potential loss of green space

I heard real passion and commitment to thinking around the future of the site including:

- Retaining the green space for health, wellbeing of Newtown residents
- The need to encourage walking and cycling and not increase traffic for congestion and worsening air quality
- Retaining the wild space and encouraging biodiversity
- The need for open informal green space for connecting people and
- Keeping all trees and shrubbery
- Places for people to meet and socialise. Places under cover.
- Places for community gatherings, parties, workshops, training and exercise classes
- Large multi-use hall space for a range of activities
- Maintained and improved Play Equipment for families

The views and representations (including a formal report from Save Clifton Hill Green Space) have been heard and recorded. This will form part of the thinking and evidence for the next phase of council decision making and the future design and development of the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot Programme

### **Correspondent 5**

I noticed a group of 5 people who were not recording anything on the sheet of paper. I approached with some trepidation, I did not know what I would find. This is some of the discussion:

- a) They were very frustrated as they were very upset and angry at the closure of the Clifton Hill Leisure centre without as they felt community consultation.
- b) They felt they were there at the evening session on false pretences -they had been told by the city council committee members when the decision for closure had been taken, that they would have the chance through local consultation to give their views and look at alternative uses for the site. They had been told that the meeting this evening was this consultation opportunity. They felt that the agenda for the evening did not reflect this expectation. They therefore felt at a loss to participate in the questions around creating a healthy and active community when they felt that they had lost the very community resource that did support the community being healthy and active.
- c) I took on board their frustration and attempted to discuss with them the difficult situation the council found itself in with the bad storm damage and the cost of repairs, and the fact that there would be some compensation as £39m was being invested in a state of the art new swimming pool and leisure centre for the whole city, that was only 5 mins walk away from where we sat there and then in Newtown.  
Some of the group didn't have much information about the new leisure centre, and some doubted that it would ever be built. As we talked it through I could note some recognition from people that they could see it was a difficult decision, but they still felt that a new state of the art centre would not compensate for the leisure centre on their doorstep that they could use for all

sorts of sports activities, social gatherings, family events and activities including children's parties.

- d) One of the participants at the table expressed to me that she did care very much about the inclusion issues that we had attempted to discuss that evening – how to create a healthy active community that was inclusive to all... she felt that the timing was wrong as people needed a chance to talk about their loss of the Clifton hill centre. She asked that we did keep in touch with people as they would want to engage with us again... just not now about this issue.

I left the venue feeling pleased to have had the opportunity to listen to residents who were so committed and passionate about their community.

They were on the whole eloquent at explaining what the leisure centre had meant to them, the different generations of their family and to the wider community. They also showed great commitment to the green space around the centre, the importance of this to the community and the wider area for spaces to walk, pick blackberries and enjoy some 'wilder' unkempt space.

The feedback we received showed that many residents were angry about the loss of the centre and the decision making process which they felt had not taken account of local wishes. Whilst understanding the pressures on the council with the cost pressures of repairing the centre, they didn't feel able to contribute positively at the moment as they were feeling let down.

Participants were frustrated but they still treated council officers and facilitators with patience and respect.

Thank you to Karen and David and the local councillors who helped to manage the evening allowing us to hear the important community frustration. I'm sure the evening ended quite positively allowing us to continue to build a productive and fruitful working relationship with this dedicated and passionate community.

### **Correspondent 6.**

Please see below my additional thoughts and reflections from Tuesday and attached a public consultation report from The Association for Protection of Clifton Hill Green Space. Just in case you didn't get a copy.

- People were angry that they'd not been consulted regarding the Clifton Hill sports centre and surrounding green space sale.
- Some people were very clear that it's the eight acres of current green space that they don't want new buildings built on. They appreciate that the current Clifton hill sports centre might need to be knocked down to make way for another building.
- The relationship between ECC and the local community seemed poor. There were grave concerns about ECC making decisions without prior community involvement and consultation.
- Faraday House (60+ sheltered housing) residents miss their warden who used to look in on residents and organise activities. One lady spoke about feeling very isolated and lonely. She was only in her early 60s. The bus stop on Heavitree Road opposite the entrance to Grendon Road puts residents off from catching the bus as there is no crossing nearby for them to safely cross the very busy Heavitree Road. She said that one visually impaired resident

often puts herself in danger by crossing the road and 'hoping' traffic will stop for her.

- Concern over the free bus pass not being available at 60. Increases peoples isolation if they can't afford to go out and about on day trips. 'There's only so many times you can walk up and down Exeter High Street'. One lady was also offered to use the facilities at Westbank in Exminster. She went once and said it was great but can't afford to go on a regular basis due to the cost of the bus.
- People love Newtown and are proud of their community.
- My table discussed at length that if the final decision is to keep Clifton Hill Sports Centre closed and Sidwell Point becomes their closest centre they'd like to see a safe and convenient pedestrian route from both ends of Newtown to Sidwell Point. At present, the Vue roundabout is really inaccessible for families as it's too dangerous to cross. Especially if children are using scooters.

## **Correspondent 7**

I can summarise the evening from a quote from the author Roy T Bennett:

"Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don't listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don't listen with the intent to reply. We listen for what's behind the words."

Firstly, I have to say a big thank you to Wild Zone (Karen and David) for organising a fantastic evening and bringing a large number of communities together. I counted we had 79 people attend excluded 8 of us who were helping at the event.

From my understanding, the conversation started with a group of people who were frustrated and quite angry about preserving green spaces and experiencing lack of communication with the council. Some people have a lot of emotion attached to Clifton Hill and have concerns about losing their much-loved building. Many people had concerns that their voice was not heard by local authorities.

We had a very difficult start and we witnessed a lot of frustration, anger and mistrust people have from communities for their local councillors and the council. People were not willing to take a part of what we wanted to hear.

Later after the introduction from council officers and local councillors, people were still disengaged until the group had opportunities to express their views and frustrations, and I believe it could have been a difficult task for us officers and councillors to take. However, what was most powerful lesson I learned from the event, is that when people were able to express their feelings and frustrations, they felt their voice was heard. Later on, suddenly most of the frustration and anger had disappeared from the room and people started to engage in the conversation.

I saw a number of people who walked into the room with anger and frustration and refused to sign in. Later, by the end of the conversation, it was the same people who volunteered to clean up, which clearly indicates the power of listening and how we can create a resilience by listening to people without being defensive.

James and Councillor Mathew Vizard played a constructive role in the conversation, especially when they said they would listen without being defensive; they admitted

the mistake that was made in the past. James said he would relay the conversation to council leaders, which had changed the atmosphere in a very positive manner and people started engaging.

However, although a large group has attended the meeting (consisting of very confident individuals) and engaged with the community, I felt we still needed to reach out to the groups who are not engaged or even not aware of any of the council plans in their own neighbourhood or don't have the confidence to express their view because of the barriers they have in their everyday life.

My main reflection from the event was that when we are willing to listen to our communities with curiosity of what they want to say, without being defensive and being honest with them in terms of what we can or cannot do, show our integrity with our actions rather than replying or defending our mistakes – then we will get resilient communities and can build bridges with the communities, which I hope we did in our conversation evening with Newtown communities on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

**Correspondent 8:**

*Response by telephone (Transcribed by David Hawkins and sent to respondent for approval of accuracy)*

X liked the way the meeting avoided situation of having one person talking from the front. Despite missing 20 minutes or so in disorder the meeting became very focused and creative by having tables work collaboratively on the issues. People had to sit down and think about things. He thought James and Karen both contributed to creating this positive turn of events.

As an X he didn't feel too aggrieved about the hi-jacking of the meeting because there hadn't been proper consultation about the decision to close the Leisure Centre and sell the land for development. He said no one in a political party can complain about residents wanting a say in things.

He did really want to put over his issue and make sure that it's included in the report. He considers it extremely important that council takes on board maintaining trees, wildlife and public access to the Clifton Hill site.

He is concerned that the play equipment in Belmont Park be upgraded and replaced promptly. There was an excellent slide from Germany which has now been removed because of the replacement of the Belmont Hut.

He considers it very unfortunate that other councillors who voted for the closure of the Leisure Centre were not at the Community Conversation to see how passionately the people of Newtown feel about the loss of an important public facility. If some of the councillors had been at the meeting they would realise the degree of opposition and the well-considered reasons for wanting to retain green space for the wellbeing of the community.

He was concerned that the company running the Riverside Leisure Centre is closing the crèche and the café and replacing them with more fitness machines. This is a great pity because health is not only about exercise, it's about people having social contact and places to hang out. Not only will mothers who want a place to meet and exercise not have places to leave their children, the people who ran the crèche and café are likely to be out of a job. This kind of rationalization runs contrary to an informed conception of what creates well-being. It's not just a question of strength

and cardio. It will be a great pity to lose the multi-purpose hall of the Clifton Hill Centre in this regard because it was used by a wide range of sports and community groups. This facility will not be replaced by the development at St Sidwells Point.

Finally he took exception to someone saying they had been hung out to dry by the Council. He thinks it unfair that people do not make the connection between the austerity policies of the central government and the struggle local councils are having to maintain local services with diminishing resources. Probably the Council had not done an adequate job in explaining to people the part that austerity has played in trying to deal with the problems of the Leisure Centre and Clifton Hill.

## Appendix 5: From a Newtown resident

**Sent:** Thursday, October 11, 2018 10:25:45 PM

**Subject:** Clifton Hill Green Space

It was nice to meet you the other day and to know that you are a keen birdwatcher. I've had an unusually busy time this week probably because we have had visitors staying with us. However as promised I'm giving you below a list of all the plants I can think of which grow on the site. Some of them are quite rare for the area and few and far between and some don't appear every year while others grow in profusion or are confined to certain areas. As far as any that are regarded as "common" are concerned my only comment is (a) you won't find them growing undisturbed in our parks and gardens and (b) you don't need me to tell you that such common plants as nettles and ivy – and even brambles -provide ideal cover and food for many creatures. I always think how sad it is that on new developments so often the only plants included in landscaping schemes are the same old boring shrubs of little or no interest to birds and insects though I suppose it's better than nothing. Anyway I digress!

You asked for the information by the end of this week. I don't have the time to give them to you in alphabetical order or order of seasonal appearance with Latin names or precise descriptions or an indication as to where they may be found. But I have been truthful so no rare orchids appear in my list! Finally please bear in mind I am no expert – just somebody with an amateur interest in botany.

I'll start with the common ones that everyone knows:

Blackberry (at least 2 varieties)

Stinging Nettle, Dandelion, Common Daisy, Ivy

And then then some which include the not so readily identifiable ones:

Willow Herb (2 varieties), Cut-leaved Cranesbill, Buttercups (2 varieties), Speedwells (3 varieties), Cuckoo Pint, Lady's smock, Goat's Beard, St John's Wort, Yarrow, Cinquefoil, Silverweed, Bird's- foot Trefoil, Tutsan, Yellow Archangel, Red Dead-nettle, Shepherd's Purse, Wood Woundwort, Teasel, Primrose, Common Vetch, Tare Forget-me-not, Common Persicaria, Ground Ivy, Herb Robert, Sorrel, Thistles (2 varieties), Knapweed, Red Clover, White Clover, Goundsel (2 varieties), Bindweed (2 varieties), Wild Garlic, Agrimony, Spotted & Black Medick, Pyrenean Cranesb, Greater Plantain, Hedge Mustard, Charlock, Lamb's lettuce, Lesser Celandine Fool's Parsley, Goosegrass, Enchanter's Nightshade, Wood Avens, Knot-grass Scarlet Pimpernel, Chickweed, Pineapple weed, Nipplewort, Horehound Spurge (2 varieties), Ragwort, Ivy-leaved toadflax, Wall Rocket, Ribwort Plantain Canadian Fleabane, Crimson or Grass Vetchling (my favourite!), Wild Rose (one pink bush/one white), Various yellow-flowered Compositae (difficult to identify but possibly Hawkweed/ Hawk's-beard/ Cat's-ear) , Also 2 plants not really native but present; Spanish Bluebell, Honesty, Plus 2 native plants I introduced about 3 years ago which seem to have taken root. Meadow Cranesbill. Centaury

Also there are many varieties of meadow grass which I can't identify but they include some sedge-like grasses

As I briefly mentioned when we met I don't have scanning facilities but I'll send you a copy of a letter I wrote to the City Council on 29 August; to date I've had no response – not even a simple acknowledgment.

I hope the above is useful.