



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

For ease of reference topics appear as separate subjects rather than in the order discussed. Items do not appear in any order of priority, and may appear under an unlinked agenda item (e.g. AOB)

Minutes 26th March 2024

1. Welcome and Meeting Etiquette

Notice was given that the meeting was being recorded.

2. Apologies

Cllr Lee Watson, Claire Asplin, Hilary Mason, Lee Stevens.

3. Agree Minutes from 30th January 2024

Minutes were passed, having been distributed via the mailing list and placed on the website.

4. Guest Speaker – Brian Warrens, Backstage Centre

An interesting presentation was given about the centre which is 12 years old.

It was explained they cannot publicise much of what goes on due to client confidentiality clauses and anonymity for celebrities.

Theatre makes up 25% of their trade and they work with many comedians on pre-tour rehearsals, including Steve Coogan and Bill Bailey.

The music side of their business includes pre-tour rehearsals and video recordings.

Kylie Minogue's international tour practice was held there; and Roger Waters of Pink Floyd used a full orchestra when reworking the album Dark Side of the Moon.

For a couple of months during COVID the premises was used as a warehouse for Food Bank until regulations changed. They were then able to make film and TV and mostly made programmes for Sky, and also benefitted from work Elstree Studios had had to cancel and couldn't reschedule.

62% of occupancy for 2020 was taken up with recording 3 series of a show.

A Pot Noodle advert was filmed which featured 2 dogs and included parts of the park and High House.

2021's work was pretty much all TV, proving to be their most successful year financially.

2022 saw the Centre getting back to a mix of programmes.

Artists had been writing during lockdown, but music festivals had been cancelled and new albums can't all be released at the same time. With no new money this sector has been taking time to recover.

Filming in lockdown was difficult, particularly intimate scenes, so they created a bubble for actors, used doubles for reverse shots, and used Perspex screens.

They predominately worked with HPO, Sister Productions, Avalon, Channel 4, UKTV, Live Nation, ITV2.



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The Centre also provides education and training, including motion capture training which is a requirement for jobs in the digital world. It is part of the South Essex Colleges Group and focuses on creative and vocational areas. 43% of their degrees are with the University of East Anglia and UAL London (University of Arts London), and then with smaller provisions like Anthony Ruskin University and Open University. Apprenticeships, short courses, re-skilling, and upskilling feature on the Centre's list of priorities and they also work with armed forces leavers.

The Centre works with schools and has conducted a careers event at Treetops, mentioning that some fantastic animators are on the autistic spectrum.

Logistics is one of the biggest parts of the entertainment business but is not talked about.

Looking to the future, the Centre is working on perfumes and hybrid-entertainment such as the Dome, an immersive experience touching all the senses.

Brian acknowledged the need to expand citing 4 reserve bookings daily, but of the importance to get the spec and detail right for the new market of the 21st century. The Backstage Centre was designed to do things differently to studios so can offer more to clients and is an open campus.

The Theatre Advisory Council is trying to get the government to provide student grants. Bursary schemes are a post code lottery. Apprenticeships are jobs, not courses, so can be started at any time.

Brian agreed to look at their schedule to see if there are any spots outside closed set times and other events to arrange a tour, but this might be short notice.

5. Updates/Matters Arising

Cadent Gas Works

Cadent has not been working in accordance with Council guidelines and the work along London Road has been cancelled.

Post Office

The local post office remains closed whilst building works continue.

Care Centre

The online appointment system, 7am-12pm, is a pilot and reception staff are supposed to help patients who have trouble or are unable to use the system.

It was reported that by 10am all triage forms for the day have been utilised.

The Council has initiated a Stage 1 complaint re lack of access and receptionists not helping. This has also been taken up with Thurrock Alliance and raised with the portfolio holder. Please pass on any evidence for future complaints to your local councillor, who is also trying to find out what services will be available in the medical centre.



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Defibrillator

Our 2nd defibrillator will be fitted to the outside of The Fleet and registered with The Circuit who emails the Forum if they provide anyone with the access code. The cost to the Forum was £750, the remaining 50% of the cost was obtained via funding.

Permit Parking Zone 2 Consultation

The permit time is being extended to 8am-12am, 7 days per week.

Zone 1A Meeting

A meeting took place with Sanctuary, the Council's new Head of Regeneration and Cllr Lee Watson to discuss the first part of the development consisting of 34 houses. The company PCRL 1A has gone into liquidation with debts of £16-17 million. Sanctuary has 'stepping rights' as they were contracted to build the first 34 houses, and can build the remaining 27 homes.

Sanctuary is pleading poverty and not adhering to the design access statement, e.g. there are no plans to remove ivy from the trees, conduct planting, plant the woods, put in the footpath.

Proposals are with Planning to move the play area.

Sanctuary will talk to residents of Caspian Way because of how close the new builds are in relation to them.

Mark Bradbury is in talks with Sanctuary about other proposed developments in the borough. It was suggested these talks be placed on hold.

It was questioned whether PCRL submitted details in the planning application in line with what they had told the community and whether the scheme is disingenuous.

Cllr Lee Watson will continue to seek resolve for the various issues.

Sanctuary has been made aware the Council CEO is attending our meeting in May and of their need to provide solid updates about the scheme for sharing at that time. The latest en masse moving in date is now said to be August.

Ward Boundary Consultation

Our official ward boundary name is West Thurrock and South Stifford.

It has been proposed that Uplands and Watts Woods be removed from Aveley ward and linked with Purfleet-on-Thames in a new ward.

If that happens the number of councillors will drop from 3 to 2.

Quiz Night 26th April 7.30pm

Please arrive from 7pm so you have time to sign up and chat before the start.

Thanks was given to Gail for her prompt work in supplying questions for the event.

6. Councillor Comments

Cllr Aaron Green:

There has been a noticeable increase in Section 21 Notices - enforced evictions from private landlords - and the councillors are helping people as best they can.

There is a large amount of fly tipping across the ward.

3 cars with no tax/insurance, behind Marine Court have been removed.

If you suspect a car has been dumped, please get in touch with the councillors.

The Garrison capital project replacing windows, doors, roofs has experienced issues with the way the work has been undertaken and the council are working on this.



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One way to save a few pounds is by linking up with a neighbour to access the garden waste discount when paying for 2 bins and splitting the cost.

Cllr Aaron Green thanked everyone for their support during his first year as a local councillor.

7. AOB

Station Noticeboard

This has disappeared for a second time. Cllr Qaisar Abbas is chasing this.

D-Day

There will be a simple beacon lighting and perhaps a little something else. Lynn Gittings has arranged a piper for us. Lee Stevens will take the lead on this event.

Meeting Length

We are trying to reduce the length of the meeting.

Gurkha Memorial Day 21st April

Commemorating 209 years since the Gurkhas linked with English army.

Subject to planning permission, a memorial will be unveiled in the car park in front of the silhouettes on August 25th. Historic England have queried a structure being erected in what should be an open setting and this is being addressed.

8. Next meeting

Tuesday, 28 May, Dr Dave Smith, CEO Council

Please send any questions you have to the chair in advance of the meeting so that Dr Smith has the opportunity to provide answers on the night.