

# JESMOND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

DISTRIBUTED FREE TO ALL JESMOND HOUSEHOLDS

AUGUST 2012

## IF IT'S LOCAL, BE VOCAL!



Few issues have a greater impact on communities than planning. Everyone has a strong opinion about the place where they live, and everyone wants to have their say about its future. The preponderance of available evidence points towards the involvement of people at an early stage, and enabling them to wield genuine power in the planning process.

Over the immediate future, local government will undergo rapid and considerable change. The Government's commitment to localism signifies the end of "top down" determination of land use and development. The accent is now on community empowerment.

What does this mean? It entails giving far greater powers to local people to shape the communities and environment in which they live. Local authorities will become "enablers", responding to and supporting local action.

This is called Community Led Planning (CLP) and is a step-by-step process that enables every citizen to play a part in and contribute to, improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area. It will require people coming together locally, researching local needs and priorities and agreeing a range of different actions which help to improve their neighbourhood.

CLP is not a one off, quick fix for any community. It requires people from different walks of life to learn to work together over a sustained period of time. In doing so, they will discover the skills, knowledge and confidence to take action for themselves, tapping into available resources wherever possible.

In any community there will be many different interests. A good Community Led Plan will allow everyone to get involved and put forward their views and opinions as to how the neighbourhood should develop is critical to the success of any Community Led Plan is extensive deliberation between individuals and community groups, with input from external organisations and service providers where appropriate. This provides everyone with the chance to share their views and listen to the needs and concerns of others before reaching collective solutions that benefit the community as a whole.

### Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Bill proposes new powers for communities to influence planning decisions in their neighbourhood. By producing Neighbourhood Plans, they will be able to propose new land use development, such as the building of new shops, offices or homes and what green spaces should be protected. They can be created by parish and town councils, or neighbourhood forums in non-parished areas. All Neighbourhood Plans must be subjected to an independent check to ensure they meet minimum criteria, such as general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan. If Neighbourhood Plans pass this check, they must then be put to a public referendum in the relevant neighbourhood area. If it receives approval via a simple majority of the vote, the new plan will form part of the statutory development plan and any planning applications in that neighbourhood will be determined using those policies. Neighbourhood Plans may result in Neighbourhood Development Orders which can be used to grant outline or full planning permission for certain types of development in the neighbourhood area.

For many years, Jesmond residents have expressed their frustration at planning policies which they felt were, in part at least, inappropriate to the Jesmond character. The Unitary Development Plan, introduced in 1998, applied citywide, and did not take into account the diversity and needs of local communities. Some of the provisions in the UDP have been "saved" and new planning policies have been implemented.

The role of the JRA and other residents' associations, as well as a wide range of community organisations, businesses and individual residents will be pivotal in the months to come. The Council is already consulting on how best to formulate its planning policies. Hopefully, the formation of a Jesmond Neighbourhood Forum will bring about the changes that will maintain the sustainability of our community for the future.

**WHAT YOU DO  
TODAY  
CAN IMPROVE ALL  
YOUR TOMORROWS**

**WE APPRECIATE ALL THE MESSAGES OF THANKS FROM RESIDENTS WHOM WE HAVE MANAGED TO HELP OVER THE PAST YEAR. IT'S NICE TO KNOW THAT WE CAN, AND DO, MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITY MORE SUCCESSFUL AND A NICE PLACE TO LIVE IN?**

**YOU CAN, BY BECOMING A JRA COMMITTEE MEMBER.**

**THE PAY? NON-EXISTENT! THE TIME? A COUPLE OR SO HOURS A MONTH. THE SATISFACTION? PRICELESS!!!**

**IF YOU FEEL WORKING FOR THE FUTURE OF JESMOND IS WORTH THIS, AND MORE, THEN CONTACT ALAN GRANT**

(jesmondresidentsassociation@gmail.com) or telephone (0191)2121471

### AGENCIES WILL GET NEW POWERS TO DEAL WITH ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Home Secretary is proposing radical reforms to introduce more effective measures to tackle antisocial behaviour. The white paper also puts these plans in the wider context of reforms to the policing and criminal justice landscape and work to turn round the lives of the most troubled families.

In her statement, the Home Secretary said that, first and foremost, residents want the behaviour to stop, and the perpetrators to be punished for what they've done. They want the authorities to take their problem seriously, to understand the impact on their lives and to protect them from further harm. They want the issue dealt with swiftly and they don't want it to happen again.

Antisocial behaviour is fundamentally a local problem that looks and feels different in every area and to every victim. Local agencies should respond to the priorities of the communities they serve, not to those imposed from Whitehall. From November this year, directly elected police and crime commissioners will be a powerful new voice for local people, able to push local priorities to prevent antisocial behaviour from being relegated to a 'second-tier' issue.

*Continued on next page*

**FIREWORKS DISPLAY**  
Last year's Fireworks Display by the Newcastle Cricket Club was an outstanding success, especially with the kids...

A limited number of tickets will be available from the JRA in advance of the official launch. Prices are £4.00 per adult and £2.00 per child. Send your remittance to Alan Grant, 35 St. George's Terrace, Jesmond, NE2 2SU, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.  
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

**The JRA would like to thank both North and South Jesmond Ward Committees for granting funds for the printing and distribution of this Newsletter.**

**It would also thank the Newcastle and Northumberland Society for the use of its office facilities for its Committee meetings.**

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Wednesday, 12th September 2012 at 7.00 p.m. at the Newcastle Cricket Club, Osborne Avenue, Jesmond. All residents are cordially invited to attend. Light refreshments will be available. To obtain an advance copy of the Agenda, email the Secretary on jesmondresidentsassociation@gmail**

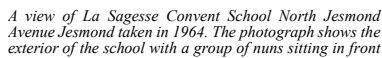
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The largest, most expensive and controversial planning application for decades proposing the redevelopment of both the North Jesmond House and Jesmond Towers sites by Shepherd Construction was refused on a majority vote by Newcastle Council's Council's Planning Committee, meeting on the 10th August last. Planning officers had recommended refusal in their report, despite last-minute amendments being submitted by the applicants.

The main thrust of the objections hinged around the density and number of houses on the North Jesmond House site and the height and design of an apartment block to the North, overlooking Matthew Bank. The redevelopment of the Stable Block also came under criticism as Planning Officers felt that its bulk impacted too much on Jesmond Towers.



The JRA's 'Report It' campaign saw a notable number of residents contacting us about incidents of noise nuisance over the last year. It has been useful to hear about these and has enabled the JRA to ensure that every incident it hears about is reported to the relevant authorities. It appears to have had an effect, with the City Council, Police and Universities appearing to take these more seriously, and pledges of more funding support for Operation Oak – the extra policing patrols designed to tackle noise and anti-social behaviour in Jesmond. There are still occasions when the reporting and follow-up system doesn't work effectively, and the JRA has been involved in discussions with local Councillors and the City Council about improving response and follow-up procedures. The JRA encourages residents affected by noise and anti-social behaviour to continue reporting incidents to the authorities, as well as letting the JRA know about these, as it remains committed to tackling disruptive behaviour in Jesmond.

The Council's Letting Boards Steering Group is still in the process of considering options to control the year-round display of letting boards, about which residents have expressed concern for a long time. The options are:

1. A voluntary code. This was proposed but without success.
2. A complete ban. Further research needs to be carried out to control a possible increase in window posters.
3. Restricting the display time from September to December.

Following a meeting earlier this year between the JRA Committee and Nick Brown MP to discuss local concerns, Mr. Brown has subsequently presented a Private Members Bill to limit the display of external advertisements concerning lettings and for connected purposes. The Bill is to get a second reading in September.

With the introduction of the A4D policy in areas of Jesmond, residents have expressed the view that planning applications for HMOs should be decided by the Council's Planning Committee and not by Officers under delegated powers.

The Government will provide crucial support to local areas by: focusing the response of anti-social behaviour on the needs of victims empowering communities to get involved in tackling antisocial behaviour ensuring professionals are able to protect the public quickly focusing on long term solutions.

Transition Jesmond is working with other environmental groups to investigate options for reducing traffic on Acorn Road in order to make it a more attractive place to shop, relax etc.

The JRA understands that one of the options which is being explored is the complete pedestrianisation of Acorn Road.

We have been approached by a number of businesses on or near Acorn Road which are strongly opposed to complete pedestrianisation. Typical of the reactions is that of Sunil Khanna, the owner of the Medicentre, who said, "Banning cars completely from Acorn Road would have a devastating effect on the shopping area. In the case of my own business, many elderly people cannot access the pharmacy without the assistance of a car."

When the issue was raised at the North Jesmond ward meeting in July, all who spoke were strongly against a complete ban on cars in Acorn Road.

The JRA view is that to have a successful pedestrianised Acorn Road a multistorey car park would be needed in the vicinity. There is, however, no prospect of this being built in the near future.

The Association thanks all of those who make donations to provide the essential financial support to continue its work. The major part of your donations is spent on day to day administrative expense and the Association's involvement in national initiatives such as the National Organisation of Residents Associations. The donations can also support the printing and distribution of the Association's Newsletters. The Association is grateful to the Ward Councillors in both North and South Jesmond for their financial contribution to the printing and distribution of the Newsletters. As well as these regular calls on your donations, there are occasions when the Committee feels that some financial help to others is appropriate to ensure Jesmond remains a great place to live. Recent contributions have been made to the Jesmond Orchard, the Cricket Club and a residents' group challenging a licensing application. How your donations are used is made clear in The Association's Financial Statement presented at the Annual General Meeting each year. The ways in which you can make a donation to the Association is included in the form at the end of this Newsletter.

Over the years, many unique churches were built in Jesmond, but few have lasted except those of architectural or historical importance. The Osborne Road area was developed between about 1860 and 1910 in relatively affluent economic times. Villas and good terraced housing sprang up alongside a synagogue, five substantial churches, and a grammar school. The then ethos was hard work, religious observance and charitable activities. During the next sixty years church attendances and income fell, forcing the amalgamation of four non-conformist churches, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational, as the United Reformed Church on the corner of Tankerville Terrace and Burdon Terrace. The Baptist Church, a solid building with a square tower, and of the Methodist church on Clayton Road with its slim spire and useful big clock, were both demolished to make way for residential development.

Even the synagogue – a striking building – is used for secular purposes. Today, there is no municipal hall and many facilities that united the residents of Jesmond have disappeared.

Nowadays, the United Reformed church hall is used for more than religious services, hosting a toddler group, accommodates the Blood Transfusion Service, a polling station, a number of craft classes and other activities. The church aims to make fuller use of the whole building, and has a well honed plan and all permissions to do so. The heating, acoustics and lighting all need up-dating, the entrance made wheelchair friendly and easier for all and, by forming an extra room within the building, additional useable space would be provided. This improvement work is estimated to take some six months.

As things stand, some money is already available and pledged to begin the improvements but, once the project begins, no further grants will be forthcoming to complete it. Social cohesion requires meeting places and South Jesmond needs them. The question is posed: do we grasp the opportunity or let it fall by the wayside?

## JRA CHALLENGES COUNCIL OVER YHA PLANNING DECISION

The JRA has queried the proceedings of the NCC Planning Committee in its decision to grant the planning application for the former YHA Hostel on Jesmond Road for conversion into apartments.

The JRA took the view that the Committee should have received confidential advice and information in camera before a decision was arrived at. According to the minutes, the Committee voted to refuse the planning officers' recommendation and after a closed session, then voted to grant it.

The Council has made a full response to the JRA's concerns but the JRA felt that the matter could only be resolved by an independent adjudicator.

The matter has been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman for a decision.

An innovative partnership has been announced between the City Council's Library Service and Jesmond Community Leisure (JCL - the operators of Jesmond Pool), in order to further develop the range of activities on offer at Jesmond Library. The Library Service will continue to provide the full range of traditional library services in the recently renovated building, but JCL will recruit extra volunteers to support the existing staff, and introduce a range of new activities to the building. Depending on public views, these might include extra activities for small children, small concerts or arts events, training courses (such as on computers or local history) or community events. If you would be interested in helping out at the library, or you have views as to extra activities which should be introduced, please contact Glenn Armstrong at Jesmond Pool on 0191 281 2482 or [jesmondpool@btconnect.com](mailto:jesmondpool@btconnect.com).

***All planning applications are posted on the Council's website. How to access the weekly list:***  
***1. Go to the Council website at***

2. ***Scroll down to the Planning & Buildings section and click on the link to access***
3. ***The Planning and Buildings page. Click on Planning.***
4. ***On the next page, scroll down to “Search for and view Planning Applications”***
5. ***On the next page, click on “Public Access for Planning”***
6. ***This brings you to the Simple Search Page.***

***You can now search the weekly lists of new applications by date and Ward or enter an address or reference number to access the details.***

**A useful facility allows you to "track" the progress of any application and receive update emails on progress. You must register giving your email address and a password.**

**Information on the application page gives details of any submissions and will enable you to view all documentation, including plans.**

**You can also make any submission by email via the website and you can request confirmation by email.**

**Contact the JRA if you need any help with this**

Alan Grant, who is also Secretary of the National Organisation of Residents Associations, represented the JRA along with delegates from other residents associations at a meeting in London in May with senior officials of the Department of Culture and Local Government where there was a frank exchange of views on the new National Planning Policy Framework. Both the DCLG and NORA agreed that the meeting was most useful and discussions are continuing.

Bob Neill, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the DCLG was invited to speak at the NORA Annual General meeting in March when he emphasised the importance of the role and contribution from residents associations to the government.

NORA also continues to respond to government consultations on a wide variety of matters.

**Hon. President:** Jean Baty  
**Chairman:** Ron Armstrong  
**Vice-Chairman:** David Hickling  
**Secretary:** Alan Grant  
**Treasurer:** Bernie Whiting  
**Members:** David Etchells, Antonia Meeers-White, Sarah Lansdale, Raj Rajan, Diana Torode, Lorna Rozner, Nils Clemmetsen.

CONCENTRATE ON LISTENING TO US, THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN JESMOND, RATHER THAN TELL US WHAT IT IS GOING TO DO. THE J.R.A. HAS BEEN LISTENING TO RESIDENTS FOR 48 YEARS. IT IS YOUR VOICE IN THE COMMUNITY. PLEASE SUPPORT US BY MAKING AN ANNUAL DONATION OF ONLY FIVE POUNDS A YEAR PER HOUSEHOLD. IT'S ONLY A SMALL AMOUNT BUT A HUGE INVESTMENT IN YOUR FUTURE.

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