

# **CENTRAL NORWICH CITIZENS' FORUM**

CNCF Members Newsletter

December 2005

This is the only newsletter of 2005 that we have managed to produce, for which many apologies. This has been entirely due to the fact that the services of five very active members were lost to the Forum during the year, plus illness amongst those remaining. Because of this our activities have been somewhat constrained and limited to fewer areas and issues.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

An enormous amount of time & attention has been required during the run up to the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003. Living as we do in the city centre where most licensed premises are situated the Forum realised early in the year that a close eye should be kept on the application of this legislation.

Without proper control of anti-social behaviour, improved management of the night-time economy & careful preparation for the policing of the city centre the quality of life could deteriorate. So the Forum is engaged in a close & co-operative partnership with both the police and the licensees to ensure that residents' views are fully represented within the scope of the regulatory framework.

As a result of this co-operative approach, a new "City Centre Licensing Forum" was established on which are represented Licensees, Police, City Council, Fire Service, Cab Companies, Customs & Excise, the security industry & CNCF represented by Julian Foster.

The second quarterly meeting of this Forum will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2006 between 6 & 8 pm at City Hall. We hope for a large turnout as there should be some clear indications by then as to what effect the new licensing regime is having on the quality of residents' lives.

## A FORUM AGENDA FOR 2006?

**Members have been discussing some of their ideas and interests for future activities that the Forum might be able to pursue or to take up.**

Those we will wish to pursue are:- to give all possible help & encouragement to the YHA to re-establish itself in our area (the healthier side of youth tourism); to continue working with the CCMP to establish a Cycle Store & Facilities; to support & work with the Norwich River Heritage Group on their River Gateway Project; Litter and Recycling.

Amongst the other issues proposed for support are environmental ones: projects to do with the river and its banks as it runs through the centre, e.g., research on the possibility of flood prevention through providing a water inlet feature [as first suggested as an attraction in Will Allsop's "Magic Carpet" proposals]; community gardens; a voluntary tree warden scheme. There is also support for a Tramway system for Norwich that would help to deal with traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

On the economic development agenda, who will support the arts & culture industries by lobbying for a performance and conference centre on the car parking site at city hall? This would not only bring in more visitors but would also retain potential arts income for our locality.

### INFORMATION

Other bodies on which we have representation:

The City Centre Management Partnership Board, which has itself been subsumed into "Visit Norwich Ltd." set up by the City Council to promote Norwich as a tourist & shopping destination. Issues under discussion have been street cleansing, traffic management, green spaces, security & policing. A key topic for the New Year will be a Chapelfield traffic impact assessment

"Liveable City" Advisory Group, a city council project part funded by a European Regional development grant with partners in Lincoln, Emden, Odense, Trondheim & Gent. These areas share many of the same problems & challenges; it is hoped that a sustainable future can be attained throughout the North Sea Region by working together, sharing knowledge & experiences. This project currently includes the refurbishment of Norwich Market & the proposed changes to St. Peters Street, Gaol Hill & the Memorial Gardens.

Social Issues Round Table [SIRT Norwich] is a consultative & planning part of the Local Strategic Partnership for local authority services provision within the future overall planning framework for the Eastern Region. Amongst the issues currently under discussion are community health, Youth homelessness, Families in crisis, & "Sustainable Communities: Homes for All" – a paper from the Office of Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM].

### GOOD NEWS FROM NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

Neighbourhood Renewal Funding [NRF] – from the Office of Deputy Prime Minister

Norwich will receive NRF for the first time during the two years 2006 – 2008. It is a targeted grant and should be spent to tackle deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the delivery of sustainable service improvements, taking account of the need to respond to both national targets, locally determined priorities and targets agreed by Local Strategic Partnerships [LSP's]. There are six mandatory outcomes under the headings of :

CRIME; EDUCATION; HEALTH; HOUSING; LIVEABILITY; WORKLESSNESS

The Forum can identify at least two “most deprived neighbourhoods” within the city centre.

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

After three years of persistent effort by the CNCF to work in constructive partnership with our local authorities we note that the City Council is responding to recent major changes to the national planning system.

The Council’s Planning Service launched a public consultation on their draft ‘Statement of Community Involvement’. This explains how & when they expect to involve the whole community at an early stage when assessing major planning applications in the new planning system. It is the first in a series of new planning documents for the Norwich Local Development Framework which will guide planning up to 2021.

#### URBAN FORUM – a Community Manifesto [April 2005]

Urban Forum is a national umbrella body for community & voluntary groups involved in urban & regional policy, especially regeneration & neighbourhood renewal. They maintain that “urban regeneration will not be possible if policy making fails to take account of the needs and interests of local communities, as is increasingly being reflected in the language used by all the main political parties”. They have challenged them to end the rhetoric and make a serious commitment to involving residents in neighbourhood renewal. The Community Manifesto calls

for community involvement & development to be embedded in policy to ensure a consistent approach across government. It said that regeneration programmes would fail unless communities were given genuine ownership and the time to shape initiatives to local needs, that national targets should be abolished in favour of locally set priorities. There are three core principles set out – Community Participation, Community Development, and Community Ownership.

Despite CNCF’s current difficulties we still feel that we can report a successful year of useful activity that has helped to encourage & assist residents in central Norwich to fully participate in a civil society. The CNCF Board would like members to seriously consider becoming Directors to develop new ideas & initiatives. In particular, it seeks to enthuse younger residents to feel that they are welcome and their views & aspirations would be achievable by actively getting involved.

As always, the Forum would like encourage new members to join & take active part. Please tell your friends & neighbours about what CNCF does and stands for and that newcomers will be assisted and supported until they have found their feet, able to take a full and confident part in what the Forum is trying to achieve.