

CHAPELTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE

ACTION GROUP

c/o Cornerstone Resource Centre, 16 Sholebroke Avenue, LEEDS LS7 3HB
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Minutes for meeting held 10th August 2006 - 180 Chapeltown Road

Present

Members of CCCAG: Rennie Lennon, Cath Muller, Edwina Thomas, Wilfred Hanley, Ferley Cruise, Susan Sindall,

Others: Jean Wilson (Neighbourhood Learning Project), Karen Morris (Space@Hillcrest), T Holness (Palace Youth Project/Mandela Centre), Mark Harwood (Roscoe Methodist Church), Shafique (Apna Centre), Mr. N Bourne (Barbados Association)

Apologies & Comments: Andy Goldring (CCCAG)

We asked those who gave their apologies for comments on

- a) the content and conclusions of the area team's community centres review
- b) whether we need a new centre in Chapeltown or not
- c) what other things we could do to make the centres/facilities more efficient/better used

- Ian Charles (West Indian Centre Trading) – had a meeting of the Bi-Centenary Transformation Project. He is very keen on the idea of a new centre.
- Annie Tunnicliffe (Resourcing the Community) – had a board meeting. “As I said at IMPaCT I think the provision needs comparing against estimates of future demand, not just current demand (which is not as much as we would like as some people do not feel confident / sufficiently interested in attending current provision). We need to think about how much participation we want to generate in future and the range of activities we want to see happening in Chapeltown and then ask the question as to whether provision is adequate or whether it will need developing to meet anticipated demand.
You may also want to note that on 17th August I made an offer in a meeting with Rory and Sheila that I could assist in the study eg., talk to groups, look at the methodology being used for the study. Perhaps there is good reason but Sheila did not take up this offer following that meeting. “

- Resourcing the Community statement:

Yes, there needs to be a new centre in Chapeltown. Leeds is in the process of going through a huge economical boost. Chapeltown being at the forefront, and a stone's throw away from the city centre, will benefit from this boom. The lower part of Chapeltown has become part of the educational area of Leeds, attached to many colleges and universities, for example, the Host media centre and Northern School of Contemporary Dance.

In 2007, the IMPaCT team, along with support via Andy Edwards Design and local artist Sketch, will be promoting Chapeltown and its community through a high visual impact project that will transform the image of Chapeltown Road.

The celebration of the Bi-Centenary of Black History will also take place in 2007, which is hoped to inspire and educate many of our young people.

We feel a new centre for Chapeltown is needed. The area is in the process of turning to a new chapter, and becoming one of the most diverse communities in Leeds. To support this change, and enable the community to have the resources needed to maintain this change, a community centre is needed. A centre for everyone to use

- Ian St Rose (Leeds REACH) – couldn't make it, but wants to remain involved. “We do need a community centre – the council is not listening to what the community wants”.
- HOST – had a board meeting. Would like to be kept informed and be involved.

- Leeds Black Elders Association – had a committee meeting. They are still developing their own plans. There is potential to collaborate with CCCAG.
- Jamaica House – information hadn't been circulated within the group, so notice was too short. They were very surprised at and disagreed with the conclusion that no community centre is needed in the area.
- Polish Catholic Centre – couldn't come due to their Christmas Party. Asked to be kept informed.
- Chapelton Children's Centre – asked to be kept informed.

Apologies were also received from:

Ramgarhia Sikh Sports Centre, Austin Burke Memorial Hall, Button Hill Community Centre, Space2 at Bracken Edge, Claude Hendrickson (YesCyber), St Martin's Institute.

Discussion

We gave a quick overview of CCCAG and the project we have in mind. People read through the community centres review for a few minutes and then discussed it in pairs for a few minutes.

Exercise 1 – there was feedback of the points that had come up in each pair and we then discussed some of the further:

Recommendation that projects suggested by CCCAG could fit into current provision: It would be more useful to have all the things in one place, rather than spread around in different buildings.	A “virtual community centre” (sic) is a load of rubbish, it's not a building. We need something permanent and visible (& central) in the area.	The centres listed in the appendix are offering 'rooms' rather than a whole building to the community. Rooms by the hour do not constitute a community service
Suggesting that resources would be better used in refurbishing current provision is misleading – that should be happening anyway, new stuff shouldn't miss out as a result.	If your home gets CPO'd, you don't get paid market value. We've lost our centre, it's unfair to expect CCCAG to pay market value for land.	The places listed in Appendix I are often unsuitable – not affordable or belonging to a specific community.
Flip the idea on its head. Rather than trying to fit the projects that CCCAG have put forward in current provision, the JSC would be a better place to put them. Some of the JSC users should or could be using current provision or the new community centre.	Regarding the recommendation that existing provision should be consolidated, there was a feeling that this would be very difficult, and also that fitting some of CCCAG's ideas into other centres might be hard	The council seems to be ignoring government/Labour Party speeches and policies on community ownership and empowerment. Is the council against the community centre because it's not Labour?
	Current provision isn't enough to meet all the needs of the community	The recommendations are a backward step – CCCAG is about forward thinking

Exercise 2 – Plus points, minus points and interesting points on “creating a new community centre”

PLUS:

Affordable facilities	Somewhere to hang out/socialise, no need to book	A centre where people can meet, communicate, help, care, support, discuss	Used by anybody & everybody – really obviously inclusive
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A community venture	Something that carries on where SureStart leaves off	Opportunities to create projects, businesses based in the centre, with childcare, space, advice (impartial and supportive)	Space for activities: dominoes, snooker, gym, etc.
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MINUS:

Used predominantly by one group – one culture, one age group	Raising the money	Competition with other centres, there may be some hostility
Staffing problems – full-time staff and staff management will be required	Facilities will be too expensive	Entrenched management – people staying put on committees and not making space for new ideas and new people.

INTERESTING:

We must satisfy the council and ourselves that it will be/is being properly managed	We don't know what it could be – once it's built, it could make all sorts of things possible, things that we can't imagine	Eco-friendly building – could have a wind-turbine/solar panels. Ensure it's not overshadowed by or in the lee of the Joint Service Centre	The library site would be a good place
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Before and during these exercises, any points which came up that people wanted to talk about further, were noted. These were:

- Pursuing LIFT Ltd and the council to see how big the final JSC plans are likely to be and to encourage them to take the community's needs for social space into account.
- Wanting to do a door-to-door/face-to-face survey of the area to find out what people think about community provision in the area and whether we need a new community centre.

Conclusion

While it was disappointing not to be able to have a more thorough discussion of how to use current provision better, it was very clear that all those present felt that building a new community centre was vital to the improvement of the area, which does not preclude improving current provision, something that needs to be looked at as well.

Cath added that discussions with other community representatives at the IMPaCT focus group sessions have arrived at similar conclusions, and that feedback from groups contacted prior to this meeting led her to believe that there is a general consensus in the area that a new centre is needed. Certainly she hadn't come across any obvious hostility or even concern about the project. However, if there are groups hostile to the idea, they may be the ones who didn't respond – for example, it seems very hard to get hold of the West Indian Centre Charitable Trust.

Cath distributed a copy of her talk to the North East Inner Area Management Committee (our local councillors and councillors for Roundhay & Moortown) given on Monday night, in response to their decision in October not to support CCCAG in our efforts – this is attached. The committee will discuss it further at their meeting in February (I think).

Next meeting

Everyone was encouraged to come to CCCAG's public meeting on Thursday 14th December, 6.30pm at HOST Media Centre – we will be trying to get the community as a whole to decide how best to proceed.