

# Gilesgate Residents Association (GRA)

## Summary minutes from Committee Meeting – 4 July 2017

### In attendance:

9 elected members

2 invited guests from County Durham Housing Group

### Apologies for Absence

1 elected member

### Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

### Discussion with County Durham Housing Group (CDHG)

The two representatives from the group were:

- the Safer Estates Team Leader for the whole of the Housing Group.
- the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer for Durham

They deal with anyone in the Housing Group who is in breach of tenancy, and work closely with other agencies if needed. They refer antisocial behaviour issues from others to the council.

The previously raised issue of **dog fouling** was discussed, the council are sending the information to the Committee. Signs for lamp-posts are being put on all lamp-posts on the County in the next few weeks. CDHG will link in with the Council to help us monitor this issue.

CDHG have several departments, including one called “Vocal”, which has small funding for localised projects. Gilesgate may be an investment area for this project, mainly involving work on community and environmental issues, working with schools etc.

GRA has leafletted about improving the Duffy, however no-one has responded. CDHG will help with letter drops in the area if that would be useful.

In terms of **antisocial behaviour**, it is rather hit-and-miss: some areas are fine, others less so, e.g. near Churchill Square and Gort Place.

GRA has put in a funding application for a programme to reduce antisocial behaviour issues by young people via the Police and the **Safer Communities Fund**. There were around 300 issues last year in the whole area – there were more issues on the Sunderland Road estate. CDHG have worked with DASH to reduce the antisocial behaviour, and it seems to have been quite effective. We discussed the lack of a provision of Community Facilities on the Sunderland Road estates side. CDHG will consider this and see if there are any possibilities to use “void” flats as a social space.

The former **Gilesgate School** site was discussed – the playing fields will be available to the public very soon, but the school site is to be replaced with housing.

One of the biggest complaints is the state of the **gardens** in that area. CDHG are sending warnings out about this. There are Council issued Community Protection Warning which can be sent out to tenants. There are also CPNs which are Court Enforced fines. If it doesn't improve, they can then escalate this to evict people.

Some people are dumping waste over fences, for example there is an issue with a footpath near Cuthbert Avenue which has not been tidied since the new houses were. The path has been reported several times. Please let the council know if there is any case of fly tipping in the area. This will be examined by CDHG.

CDHG believe officers still do estate walkabouts – but sometimes they do not seem to be followed up. CDHG believe that there are plans to do more estate walkabouts, and will work with GRA to identify problem areas. There was a discussion relating to the provision of waste removal for residents, e.g. skips or a caged trailer. The main issue of this was identified to be cost.

The **rat** situation in Cuthbert Avenue, Hilda Close, Oswald Avenue was discussed. The community are doing their best to fix it, without the support of the authorities: the Council blame the water board; the water board blame the council. CDHG will be contacting Environmental Health, and will lobby on behalf of the residents. Suggested that if this isn't resolved before GRAs next meeting that all parties should be invited around the table to discuss the issue.

The paths at the back of Laurel Avenue were also discussed for dog mess. This can be reported to the Council via the website online via the **Durham County Council Dog Fouling**. Registration is required.

## Matters arising from last meeting

The Baptist church have been in touch with dates about the **Pie and Peas Supper** and **Quiz**. It was agreed that Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October is the best date. There will be a vegetarian alternative. Options for choice of pie will be available when booking tickets.

A suggestion was received about a day out to Scarborough on **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August**. Pickups points would be the Duffy and the Majestic bus stops. Time dep Durham 0845, depart at ~16.30. Also look at the price of doing a Whitby drop-off. **Ticket price will be in the order of £10.00**. This will be discussed with Laurel Avenue Community Association regarding support, and areas of interest will be identified. GRA's Chair and Treasurer will meet on Tuesday 13 July to examine the feasibility of this idea. This will be advertised to local primary schools before the end of term.

A funding bid has been submitted to the Durham Community Foundation for a **taxi service for our Lunch Club** – it was noted that the number of people partaking in this has fallen recently. This will be heavily promoted in the next few weeks, and we will invite local Councillors to partake and “feature” their attendance in local newsletters.

A need was identified to have a marketing strategy for the Committee. High quality leaflets and publicity are needed for this, and also to update the quality of information on the noticeboards.

It was proposed to invite representatives from the Pelaw Centre, Laurel Avenue Centre, Baptist Church etc. to GRA meetings so that we can be more unified regarding events in our area.

It was discussed that the GRA's rules need a bit of modification, and this should be considered over the next year.

## Date of next meeting

5 September at 7pm – Queen's Head.

Summer Fayre 2018 will be a major item on this meeting's agenda. Please bring ideas.

The meeting was closed at 20:54