

Fifth Meeting of the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum at Paxton Hall on Tuesday 6 December 2016 at 7:30pm

Agenda and Reports

This is our Annual Meeting, so our primary task is to elect a Board for the next 12 months. We anticipate that some new members may want to register on the night, and that people might have questions about procedure. We must collect an accurate attendance list.

Informal discussion: The present KNF Board want our meetings to be more welcoming and inclusive, so we will repeat the experiment we tried in September. The meeting will start with informal discussion so people can move around, meet colleagues and talk in smaller groups. There will be some displays to stimulate discussion. Light refreshments will be provided. We will see how this goes. When people are comfortable we will sit down to do the formal business.

- (1) **Election of a Chair:** Propose John Liversedge, who chairs the Board.
- (2) **Apologies for absence:** Naomi Batten, Rose Bavage, Tom Brannigan, Wendi Carson, Sam Clarke, Sam Meadley,
- (3) **Endorsing the list of members:** The meeting is asked to approve new members who joined before the meeting (Rose Bavage, Clare Burningham, Christine Forster, Andrew Foster, Martin Groom, Eleanor Guthrie, Rita Haligah, Natalie Lunn, Jenny Mackwell, Adam Rae and Enid Ruttango) plus all those who register tonight.
- (4) **Minutes of the Fourth Public Meeting held on 27 September 2016** (attached).
- (5) **Matters arising from the minutes.**
- (6) **Secretary's Annual Report and Draft Intentions Document** (attached).
- (7) **Matters arising from the Secretary's reports.**
- (8) **Treasurer's report**
- (9) **Matters arising from the Treasurer's report.**
- (10) **Election of the Board:** Nineteen people served on the Board during 2016 (including co-options) and of these 19, Ken Stratford has sadly died and four have resigned for a variety of reasons. This leaves 14 candidates (10 men and 4 women) who offer themselves for re-election. In addition, we must invite further nominations from the floor. I propose that we seek nominations first, before the meeting decides on the size of the board, and the method of election. I say this because an exhaustive ballot for even 14 positions has the potential to take all night, and the meeting may decide to simplify the process. There are no rules about gender balance, and the meeting has the power to vary the size of the board and the method of election. The board has very limited powers and its main function is to prepare the way for our general public meetings where all the significant policy decisions are taken. Last year the Board elected its own officers and I recommend that this continues.
- (11) **General Policy discussion:** This is an opportunity to raise new matters, and possibly seek reports to a future meeting.
- (12) **Dates, times and venues for future open meetings.**

John Illingworth
5 December 2016

Fourth Meeting of the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum at Paxton Hall on Tuesday 27 September 2016 at 7:30pm

Draft Minutes

Present: (31) Helen Ashmar, Angela Barron, Steve Barron, Naomi Batten, Graham Bellamy, Tom Brannigan, Melody Brewer, Fiona Butler, John Carson, James Corah, Christine Eddison, Alleyne Ellis, Steve Gradys, Steve Harris, John Illingworth, Judith Judd, Ursula Klingel, Martin Knox, Sylvia Landells, John Liversedge, Amy McAbendroth, Celia McBrinn, Paul McBrinn, Sam Meadley, Michael Park, Andy Rontree, Josh Rose, Patsy Taylor, John Taylor, Sue Taylor and Sandra Walton

Apologies: (9) Wendi Carson, Joanne Dickinson, John Hall, Dean Mitchell, Liz Minkin, Mandy Long, Stuart Long, Fiona Venner and Lucinda Yeadon.

(13) **Informal discussion:** The meeting started with informal group discussions around four themes: (i) footpath network, (ii) Kirkstall riverside, (iii) traffic problems and (iv) parking.

(14) **Election of a Chair for this evening.** Formal business started at 8:20pm. John Liversedge was proposed and seconded as Chair, and elected unopposed.

(15) **Endorsing new members:** The meeting approved 12 new members: Angela Barron, Steve Barron, Sue Buchan, Alleyne Ellis, Martin Knox, Celia McBrinn, Sally Postlethwaite, Josh Rose, John Taylor, Patsy Taylor, Sue Taylor and Sandra Walton

(16) **Minutes of the Third Public Meeting held on 8 June 2016** were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising, other than the issues listed below.

(17) **Composite Board Minutes** for June, July and August 2016 were received by the meeting, and there were no matters arising, other than the issues listed below.

(18) **Timetable for producing a Neighbourhood Plan:** The meeting agreed the recommendations from Ian Mackay:

- (i) immediate **engagement** with residents throughout the plan area, often working in small groups and including a skills audit that maximises local input,
- (ii) production of a multi-topic **intentions document** in January 2017 with optional priority projects,
- (iii) production of a **draft plan** in spring 2017 with consultation over the summer
- (iv) publication of a **pre-submission** neighbourhood plan in January 2018
- (v) leading up to a **referendum** coincident with the local elections in May 2018.

(19) **Issues discussed this evening:**

- (i) **Traffic** was a major concern. There was consensus that traffic had reached unacceptable levels, which seriously diminished residents' quality of life. This was true whether these were moving vehicles or stationary queues, cars, vans or HGVs. Members requested noise and chemical pollution data near major highways, and detailed statistics on queue lengths and vehicle speeds at different times and locations. The Secretary said that in 2007 he had given evidence on behalf of KVCA at a Public Inquiry into the London Metric Development at Bridge Road. This evidence correctly predicted the situation which has now developed. At the time highway officers conceded privately that our estimates were accurate, but they were under political instructions from the Council to remain silent and offered

no evidence to the Inquiry. As a result, the Planning Inspector accepted the complacent Metric figures, leading to the present situation where the network is fully saturated at peak times, with no plans and no budget to handle the expected traffic growth from Kirkstall Forge or the redevelopment of the derelict Tesco site. Members were alerted to an important public meeting of the Inner West Community Committee about traffic problems on Wednesday 13 October in the Milford Sports Club, starting at 6pm.

- (ii) **Parking:** Members acknowledged that there are two separate problems. (i) Most of our houses were built before the massive growth in car ownership, so there are insufficient places for residents to park. (ii) Many parts of the ward are plagued by commuter parking and match-day parking for cricket, rugby and special events at Kirkstall Abbey. The overall shortage is estimated to be about 500 residential parking spaces, spread across the ward, *without making any allowance for commuters and other visitors*. City centre commuters find it cheaper to park all day in Kirkstall and catch a bus into town. Members agreed that Cricket matches and Rugby matches produce different traffic problems, at different times of day. The current cost of parking bays built to LCC Highways standards is about £5000 per vehicle. At this rate 500 additional bays are completely unaffordable and we need some radically different solution. There are many demands for residents' parking schemes.
- (iii) **Footpaths:** Members identified two major north – south radial routes: one along the Harrogate railway line and the other along the valley bottom following the River Aire. In addition, there are numerous parallel tracks and orbital routes linking to neighbouring wards. There is a particularly well-developed network through Hawksworth Wood, which extends across the A65 to Newlay. This links the main two north – south routes together. There was considerable interest in extending, improving and signing our local footpath network. Paul Holdsworth [tel. 0113 2251750, cp.holdsworth@ntlworld.com] offered to coordinate our efforts in this area.
- (iv) **Kirkstall Riverside:** The ambition to create a new public park in the Kirkstall Valley dates from the 1960's when Leeds City Council embarked on a coordinated program of land purchases south of Kirkstall Abbey between the A65 and the River Aire. These ambitions are reflected in the site allocations maps for the 1972 Leeds Development Plan Review. Unfortunately, the Conservative administration formed after the 1974 local government re-organisation had other priorities, and sold some important sites in Kirkstall to finance development elsewhere in Leeds. Instead of being converted to recreational open space as originally intended, both Kirkstall Mills remained in light industrial use.

These problems were compounded when Mrs Thatcher's government imposed the Leeds Development Corporation (LDC) on Armley and Kirkstall in 1988. The Council responded by creating Leeds City Development Company (LCDC). These undemocratic and secretive organisations were dominated by commercial property developers who even used a paid informer to spy on local community groups.

Nevertheless, considerable areas in Kirkstall remain in Council ownership, and LDC allocated part of the Kirkstall Power Station site for a Kirkstall Valley Nature Reserve, having discovered that the soft and corrosive fly ash lagoons were unsuitable for any form of foundation loads. The original plan envisaged a Visitor

Centre at St Ann's Mills, and this is still possible today. It requires a footbridge across the River Aire behind Morrisons supermarket at an estimated cost of £250,000. This would enormously improve public access to this recreational open space. Leeds Canoe Club want to develop a white-water canoe training course below St Ann's Mills weir, and might sensibly share the mill building with other recreational and educational users.

During the planning battles in 1988, local residents commissioned an agricultural land survey by MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food). This showed that the Burley Mills allotments were largely grade one agricultural land, the top 1% in the entire country. These allotments are deep alluvial silt that has scarcely been disturbed since the last ice-age. At one stage Leeds City Council wanted to tip a million tonnes of toxic fly ash on top of this pristine land to create a supermarket car park! You could not make this up.

At present the Kirkstall Valley is divided into thin strips by the Leeds – Liverpool canal, the Skipton railway, the River Aire, various mill goits and the A65. Access can be difficult from one area to the next, however a relatively minor investment in footbridges and footpaths would open the entire area to the public and make hundreds of acres of new recreational land accessible to inner city communities. An application had recently been submitted for a new footpath behind St Ann's Mills that would connect the riverside footpath by the Rugby Academy to the "goitside walk" created by the Kirkstall Community Program in 1985. An extension is possible behind the Kirkstall Tile Centre, creating over 1.5km of secluded waterside footpaths within a few metres of the busy A65. There are numerous opportunities for community volunteers, and it was agreed that these should be reflected in our Kirkstall Neighbourhood Plan.

- (20) **Site visits to areas of interest:** The initial list of sites was agreed (Abbey Mills, St Ann's Mills, Burley Mills Allotments, Goitside Walks, Kirkstall Forge, Kirkstall Valley Nature Reserve, Hawksworth Wood & Oil Mill Beck) with a preference for choice of weekend dates and times.
- (21) The meeting closed at 9:22pm

John Illingworth
28 September 2016
(last revision on
5 December)

Secretary's Annual Report

Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum was designated by Leeds City Council on 20 November 2015, and this is a report on our first year of operation. The Inaugural Meeting on 5 January 2016 elected a Board of 14 members. Sadly, one of our number has died. Subsequent co-options, elections and resignations have resulted in a Board of 14 at the year end. Attendance is listed below:

Board Member	position	total	possible	percent	notes
Graham Bellamy		8	11	73	
Andrew Bradley		1	7	14	
Tom Brannigan		9	11	82	
Fiona Butler		5	7	71	
Wendi Carson		9	11	82	
Keith Collridge		1	7	14	resigned Oct 2016
James Corah	treasurer	8	11	73	
Steve Gradys		5	7	71	
Steve Harris		10	11	91	
John Illingworth	secretary	11	11	100	
Daniel Lipzith	vice chair	5	11	45	
John Liversedge	chair	11	11	100	
Stuart Long		3	4	75	resigned April 2016
Amy McAbendroth		4	11	36	
Michael Park		5	7	71	
Andrea Purdy		3	5	60	resigned Sept 2016
Adele Rae		11	11	100	
Katherine Smith		9	10	90	resigned Oct 2016

All board members have contributed, sometimes outside our formal meetings. Some people have been seriously ill, some worked away from Leeds, and some faced incompatible shift patterns. It is important that we remain a supportive and inclusive organisation.

The Board met on 11 occasions and 4 full public meetings have already been held this year. Our initial membership of 113 has increased to 160. Building on the policy framework in the "Vision for Kirkstall" published in 2010, we have identified additional priority areas in flood prevention, sport and physical recreation, sustainable and affordable housing development, public transport improvements, traffic management, active travel and suburban heat networks to facilitate the switch to a low carbon economy. We must now put some flesh on the bones.

Timetable: We agreed this in September and it is set out in the minutes for our last meeting. It is ambitious but achievable and we need to push ahead.

Recruitment: Our membership has grown by 42% but it needs to grow faster. Now that we have some general policy indications, we should be contacting every household in Kirkstall, and inviting them to take part. At the end of this process there will be a public referendum on our Neighbourhood Plan. We need to win this, or we have all been wasting our time! We must ensure that our plan has been discussed, that people know what it involves, and that it has genuine popular support.

Income Streams: We are applying for the standard government grants which will fund our basic publicity and plan making activities. In addition, we are applying for other relevant sources of money which will put some icing on the cake. None of this will fund the ongoing implementation of our Neighbourhood Plan. For this we need **recurrent** income streams.

For example, several areas have requested residents' parking schemes. These will only work with paid enforcement officers, otherwise they will be ignored. It is no good looking to Leeds City Council, which is coping with a 40% income cut. Our scheme must raise its own money and we have a proposal for this, based on very low fees for local residents, and much bigger ones for outsiders. In other words, we would allow very limited parking in good locations at full market rates, which would generate sufficient income to fund the rest of the scheme.

Another example: there is a massive opportunity to create a major inner city public park in the Kirkstall Valley, with canoeing, off-road cycling, sports and wildlife and a visitor centre for the Nature Reserve. We would like to base this around Climate Change, and the need to alter the way we live. There is a possible partnership with the Welsh Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) which some of you may know. There is no way that Leeds City Council can fund this when it is struggling to look after its existing stock, BUT...

DECC (Department for Energy and Climate Change) has previously identified the Kirkstall Valley as one of the very best sites in the entire country for *water-source heat pumps*. This is old technology, exploited in a novel way. Basically it uses giant refrigerators to cool the river, and the heat thereby generated is pumped through distribution pipes and warms people's homes. It sounds crazy, but it works, and the town of Drammen in Norway is already heated in this way. It could cut home heating costs in half, compared with conventional gas boilers. It also halves our CO₂ emissions. Such schemes are being installed in England as we speak.

It would not be realistic for Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum to operate a multi-million pound sustainable energy scheme on its own. However, there is a real possibility of a partnership with local universities and a major energy supplier with substantial benefits to the local area. Like cheaper heating and a new public park...

It is not yet certain that this is a runner, but when I approached the Council's energy supplier, ENGiE, they offered to do a professional energy audit for free. There is no doubt that heat pumps work and there are millions in use all over the world. The big issue is the cost of the heat distribution network – it is easy to heat Morrisons, but more difficult on Morris Lane.

It is important to be both cautious and realistic and not embark on projects that are doomed to fail. On the other hand, this an exciting opportunity, with substantial local benefits, not least a significant number of jobs. I would be failing in my job if I did not bring it to your attention. It is important to be ambitious, even though we need some help to carry things through.

Suburban rail holds massive benefits for Kirkstall, bringing cleaner, greener travel and a major reduction in private cars. There were previously stations at Armley, Kirkstall Bridge, Newlay, Calverley and all along the Aire Valley and the Bradford line. It was also a four track system, with through trains and stopping trains. If we lived in London they would still be there, but ours were axed by the Beeching cuts, one of the most stupid management decisions in railway history. We propose re-opening the entire network, and a new station at Hawksworth Wood on the Harrogate line. It won't happen tomorrow: unless we ask, it won't happen at all.

Similarly, we should be ambitious for our **bus network**. We now face major traffic congestion on Bridge Road and on both sides of the valley along the orbital routes. This is more than annoying because in 2007 I gave evidence at a Public Inquiry, on behalf of KVCA, with a computer traffic model which predicted, more or less exactly, what has now come to pass. What is worse, there is no plan and nothing in the budget to cope with the expected traffic from Kirkstall Forge. Lord knows what will happen if they allow retail on the Tesco site.

It is absolutely vital to get buses past this jam. We need to widen some key pinch points to squeeze more bus lanes in. At present there are three separate groups of engineers studying Kirkstall Bridge: (1) hydrologists testing flood storage at Kirkstall Abbey; (2) traffic engineers looking at road capacity; (3) railway engineers looking at future growth and the height of the bridge. [They dug out the track bed when the line was electrified to get power cables under the bridge, and this has made the flooding worse.] We urgently need to get all three groups talking to each other, and looking for a comprehensive solution to three separate problems at this critical location. That is why it is in our Neighbourhood Plan.

Pedestrians: We have not forgotten the most basic means of travel. We have just installed a new crossing on Queenswood Drive, but there are many more locations where pedestrians face speeding traffic and it is difficult to cross the road. Abbey Road, Spen Lane and Wyther Lane spring readily to mind, and in addition we propose a one-way traffic system and wider footways on St Ann's Lane.

How shall we pay for this? One pot that may be very appropriate, and is also about the right size, is the CIL money. CIL stands for Community Infrastructure Levy. It is a payment from developers when they get planning permission. When we adopt our Neighbourhood Plan, more of the CIL money will be under local control.

We are establishing a group to look specifically at off-road footpaths. When footpaths were designated in other parts of the country, the old Leeds County Borough was omitted. There are dozens of public footpaths in Horsforth, but very few in Kirkstall. We have only a few more years to get our footpaths registered. If any are forgotten they will be lost.

There are two major footpath axes in Kirkstall – one along the river in the Aire Valley, the other along the Harrogate railway line. But there are dozens of smaller paths that run in parallel with the major routes, or branch off to make connections with neighbouring wards. Walking is marvellous exercise, and extends active life. There is a very good network in Hawksworth Wood, which extends into Newlay and links the two main routes together.

We are proposing housing on the Tesco site – bounded by Kirkstall Lane, Commerical Road, Beecroft Street and Kirkstall Hill. I am sure that Tesco will want to sell for retail because the land is worth more, but this would not be in the public interest. Retail generates far more traffic than housing. London Metric promised little traffic on Bridge Road, and we all know what happened next!

We are pushing at an open door, because the Council also designated this site for housing. We seek sustainable, affordable housing, similar to the "Lilac" scheme on Victoria Park Avenue, with really high insulation standards, and lower heating costs. It won't be exactly the same, because ours is a much bigger, steeply sloping site. It should be possible to bury car parks in the hillside, and give most residents a car-free level footpath to their front door.

Finally, we have some really exciting proposals for the Kirkstall Mills. Abbey Mills is opposite Kirkstall Sports Centre and is grade 2 listed, St Ann's Mills is behind Morrisons. It is not listed, but it is a very interesting building none the less. Most of the present buildings date from 1834, but the Abbey Mills *site* goes back to the Normans. Both mills have been empty for the last ten years. This has not improved their condition. About half of Abbey Mills has fallen down while I have served as a councillor, simply because of corporate neglect.

Among other things, Abbey Mills would make a smashing civic centre and a community hub, like the Armley and Harehills one-stops. This hugely successful Council initiative combines benefits advice with computer training and library facilities. They knock spots off government Job Centres for getting people back work. But there is no need to stop at this. These are big buildings with plenty of room inside. You might imagine that next to the A65 would be really noisy, but old stone buildings deaden the noise.

St Ann's Mills would make an excellent visitor centre for the Kirkstall Nature Reserve. It is surrounded by huge range of different habitats, and would make wonderful environmental education centre for inner city kids. It would be good to focus on Climate Change. It would also make a good base for Leeds Canoe Club and their white water training course, sharing their changing rooms with volunteering and other sports.

It is important to care for the entire ward. Parking problems are most severe on Queenswood Drive, Woodbridges, Hawksworth and Fillingfirs, although no area is entirely free. We do not believe it is necessary to spend £5000 on every parking bay, and look for a cheaper, porous solution based on rolled crushed brick or similar. *Providing a majority of local residents are in favour*, we would look to replace degraded grass verges with mud-free parking bays.

Another area requiring attention is the hillside between Latchmere View and the outer ring road. Litter has accumulated on this land for many years, and council staff were amazed by the scale of some deposits. We need a maintenance scheme which picks up this and similar areas across the ward and restores them to an acceptable condition.

Our plan is a working draft. It is incomplete, and there are many opportunities to suggest new ideas or to leave things out. One thing is certain: little of this will happen without a recurrent income stream. For the national rail network, and major bus schemes we rightly look to the government, but we must fund local initiatives ourselves. That is why our proposals include some money-making elements, because without these nothing will happen at all.

John Illingworth
5 December 2016

"Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds nought and six, result misery."

Mr Micawber in David Copperfield (Chapter 12) Charles Dickens

Draft Intentions Document

This is our first stab at a document which is likely to go through several drafts. It sets out broad policy objectives and is here to be amended. It is often easier to amend an existing document than to start again completely from scratch. It will be brought back to our next meeting, hopefully in January 2017. Since this is a planning document it does not specify who the providers will be, but in some cases this could be a local cooperative or community group.

Planning History: The last strategic planning document to complete the full legal cycle in Kirkstall Ward was the 1972 Development Plan Review! A 1980 Local Plan and a North Leeds Local Plan were both abandoned because the West Riding County Council was abolished before it approved the drafts. Large areas of Kirkstall were administered by the Leeds Development Corporation from 1988 to 1995 and were consequently excluded from the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The only areas to be considered were those with limited opportunity for change. For reasons that are not entirely clear, Kirkstall was also excluded from the UDP Review in 2004, so the Leeds Development Framework is the first strategic planning document since 1972 which residents can change.

Scope: Our Kirkstall Neighbourhood Plan must comply with relevant parts of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) and [Leeds Development Framework](#) (LDF). Locally, we have opportunities to suggest amendments to the LDF to avoid conflict with our Neighbourhood Plan. If our suggestions are rejected by Leeds City Council, then we must comply with the LDF. The positive outcome from a recent [Judicial Review of the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan](#) in November 2016 suggests that residents have considerable power if they choose to use it.

Sustainable Development: This is usually defined as development which meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of our successors. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and subsequent paragraphs explain how this should be applied. Paragraph 17 on *Core Planning Principles* includes the following bullet point:

- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*

Draft Policy KNF1 restricts further built development in the highest flood risk areas (presently defined as the area between the Kirkstall mill goits and the main river) EXCEPT (1) for water source heat pumps and low carbon renewable energy; (2) greenhouse crops and agricultural activities; (3) physical recreation and active travel; (4) associated educational and scientific activities.

Draft Policy KNF2 requires high design and construction standards in all new developments, and zero tolerance for second-rate cheapskate buildings in the older urban areas.

Draft Policy KNF3 supports development of the suburban rail network in Kirkstall Ward, including a new rail halt on the Harrogate line between the Hawksworth and Spen Hill estates, and a return to four track working on the Skipton / Bradford lines with the re-opening of all the stations in the Aire Valley that were closed by the Beeching review.

Draft Policy KNF4 supports development of the bus network, with additional bus lanes to be created at traffic bottlenecks, and measures to improve road safety, and reduce traffic noise, vehicle speeds and air pollution.

Draft Policy KNF5 supports the development of a low-carbon suburban heat network linked to the progressive replacement / renewal of existing water, gas, electricity, telephone and data services and the separation of foul sewage from surface water drainage.

Draft Policy KNF6 supports the development of an off-road public footpath network, and requires the Leeds flood defence scheme to improve pedestrian access to the banks of the River Aire in Kirkstall Ward.

Draft Policy KNF7 recognises the need for (1) 500 additional parking places in residential areas that were built before mass car ownership, and (2) wide-area residents' parking schemes, with differential charging in favour of residents, to reduce the problems caused by commuter, match-day and special event parking in residential areas.

Draft Policy KNF8 identifies the former "Tesco" site bounded by Kirkstall Lane, Kirkstall Hill, Beecroft Street and Commercial Road as an area for housing development (reflecting the LDF site allocations policies) and further specifies affordable high-density low-carbon housing similar in design and tenure to the nearby "Lilac" scheme on Victoria Park Avenue.

Draft Policy KNF9 identifies the vacant historic Kirkstall Mills (Abbey Mills and St Ann's Mills) for various community / educational uses, for example: after-school / breakfast clubs; artisan workshop; café; children's play; community hub; library; performing arts; physical recreation; restaurant; scientific education, research and development; social care; sustainable energy.

Draft Policy KNF10 introduces weight and speed limits, one-way traffic flows and improved pedestrian facilities on St Ann's Lane.

Draft Policy KNF11 supports litter removal, footpaths, planting and future maintenance of the recreational open space between Latchmere View and the Leeds outer ring road.

John Illingworth
6 December 2016