

Minutes of the Myddleton Road Public Meeting
Wednesday 16th October 2013

1. Introduction by Nell Riches (The Step). Called the meeting to get more people involved to affect change more quickly on the road.
2. Caroline Simpson – moved to the area 14 years ago having worked at the Canterbury Conservation Advisory Committee and an urban studies centre.

On the day she arrived there was a sign up calling a meeting to discuss the future of Myddleton Road in the nursery, which was the beginning of the Bowes Park Community Association.

Caroline showed a big pack of paperwork relating to the road from 2000 onwards to show how much work and consultation has already happened. The Myddleton Road Shopping Centre Study from 2002 stated that the loss of the Post Office and the shopping areas of Wood Green and Muswell Hill were major factors in the demise of the road. This coincided with new people in buying properties to invest in high-density rental accommodation, but most owners do not live here.

There was also a time when there were no enforcement officers at Haringey Council and there was no one council officer taking responsibility for the road and departments were not working together. Now due to the economic problems there are more applications for small flats. Lots of things are now legal and cannot be changed unless properties come up for sale.

3. Dhiren Shah – moved to the area in 1983 when his parents started the car spares shop. The shops were diverse up to the early 90s and included a baker, green grocers and a chemist (amongst lots of others). He remembers the green grocer having a Santa's grotto! He is planning to open a deli on the street and thinks a baker may also survive.
4. Catherine Summerhayes urged everyone to shop locally. If we want more shops on the road then we need to shop here to encourage and attract more shops to setup here.
5. People unsure of what current shops are and whether they are legal.
6. Councillor Matt Cooke (Haringey Labour) gave a background about the Myddleton Road Strategy Group, which was started about six years ago. The Group was started because there was no improvement on the road and no joined up council action. The Group brought key members of the council (environment,

housing, regeneration and planning), as well as the police and other key people together. There was a tight agenda and people were held accountable.

Myddleton Road used to be a lot worse but the Group has achieved a lot – heritage lighting, new paving, parking scheme, tackled rubbish issue, which used to be piled high in door-ways. English Heritage document about the shop fronts, satellite dishes moved, tables & chairs funded, supported the market. Ownership document developed.

At one time four London boroughs were housing all their emergency housing here. The group stopped that. CCTV has come and gone and they're working to get it back again.

There has been more enforcement action than anywhere else in the borough – 40 prosecutions at one time. What would it have been like if that action hadn't been taken?!?

The Group is small and it has been strategy & policy led. A mass movement is now needed – Bowes & Bounded Connected has helped and now this meeting is the beginning.

Next steps – Neighbourhood Plan, which is led by a community group, can then secure money to get things done.

7. Local resident stated that in 1986 there was a plan for a market on Wednesdays and Saturdays every week. There was also a Traders Association. There needs to be another plan and then we could apply to the European Social Fund, but we must demonstrate that employment is central to the plan. Critical that the market grows and moves up the road so there is a stronger argument for funding.
8. Kari Koonin explained that market is currently located at the bottom of the road because they had to get all the traders to agree and they needed signatures from all residents... the bureaucracy was a big barrier.
9. Questions from attendees –
 - * What is the policy on empty shops? There needs to be an incentive to start a business but there seems to be a financial penalty. People are living in the commercial premises and if there is no enforcement in four years then it becomes legal. Or it may be in the business's interest to leave it empty!
 - * Can the council compulsory purchase?

Complicated issue – there are budget constraints but the council are looking into this. Acquiring a property against someone's will, can end up in a costly legal battle (Ransford Stewart).

* Business rates are the same as Alexandra Palace, can there be a compromise with Haringey to encourage more independent shops to open (not chains)?

* Can we reach out to areas that have improved and get their advice? Highgate Neighbourhood Forum or Chatsworth Road.

10. Daniel Cowen stated that hardly anyone senior from the council comes to the Myddleton Road Strategy Group and they are just sending reports rather than attending. Matt Cooke agreed there needs to be a new approach and they had met with the new council leader last week to get him onboard. There now needs to be sustained and radical action.
11. Local resident stated that 128 was a useful community hub. There is loads of enthusiasm from locals and maybe we could encourage pop-up shops to help businesses test the area.
12. Local resident stated that there are lots of high streets in the UK with empty shops that no-one wants, but on this road there are lots of empty shops that are not for rent but people do want to rent them... sounds like a great situation!
13. New business looking for a location for a yoga and spin studio who is having trouble finding out who owns them. She wants to put money into the area but can't understand why it is so hard?
14. Matt Cooke said that there is a dark side to Myddleton Road. A few people own quite a lot of properties and don't want a happy, open and customer-facing business. Unfortunately that is not illegal. There have been lots of plans in the past but now there are new local powers. A community can make changes but it needs more authority with the involvement of traders.
15. Local resident – surely the council has the power to visit crappy properties and fine the landlords for lack of building and fire regulations?
16. Ransford Stewart, Assistant Planning Director at Haringey Council stated that the new Localism Act means that we need a plan to create a formalized Neighbourhood Action Group. That way we can secure long term funding for delivery of the plan.

17. Local resident – it would be good to think about what kind of shops would work and find some businesses who are interested and then approach the landlords.
18. Local resident – we should raise the identity of the area and brand the area. We could have artist studios and create it as an arts centre. We could approach successful traders from elsewhere to come to the market or do a pop-up and then they could advertise the area to their customers.
19. Sakina Chenot has been closely involved in the Pinkway Alliance and she said that it is key to develop personal relationships with council officers so there is continuity. Communication is key and they have tapped into a range of expertise with professional advice for free.
20. Planning – owners seem to do what they want. People unsure of where to complain regarding planning issues. There is now a discussion on the forum where applications are posted. The BPCA will also disseminate planning applications and you can join the mailing list.

Letters are sent by the council to properties in a certain radius but don't assume you will be consulted! Plus you only have 21 days to respond. The more people that tell the council then the more power the council has.
21. Number 97 outbuilding update – their retrospective planning application has been refused by Haringey. They will probably now go to appeal. It is then up to us to support Haringey's decision.
22. Number 109 update – can't find on planning website as was put in as a joint application with next door. One was built but the owner of 109 changed. New owner building now because planning permission will end within four years. No idea if it complies with plans.
23. Train bridge mural – some supported but others didn't.
24. Triangle at end of Whittington Road a poor relation to Alexandra Palace but done at the same time. Why? Could've been done in the same way and had a really positive impact.
25. Shaftesbury Hall – planning documents now online. Will be a great community space. Have a look and comment.
26. Next meeting needs to remain in a positive space.