

**Building a Unified Vision for the Future of the Crouch  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

# REPORT



# **Building a Unified Vision for the Future of the Crouch Football Club: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

## **REPORT**

**Seaford Town Council organised a visioning event together with Seaford Community Partnership (SCP), inviting stakeholder groups of the Crouch, representatives from the Police, Lewes District Council (LDC) officers & Town Councillors.**

**The aims of the event were to:-**

- 1. Enable all stakeholders to informally express their vision for their area of the Crouch to the other stakeholders & Town Councillors, without prejudice.**
- 2. To identify common aims for the Crouch.**
- 3. To identify any areas of difficulty & identify solutions.**
- 4. To build foundations for a unified vision of the Crouch.**

### **Planning of the event**

Len Fisher (Town Clerk, Seaford Town Council), Cllr Ralph Taylor (Mayor of Seaford & SCP), Jackie Blackwell (Development Worker – SCP). Two planning meetings were held.

### **Background & logistics of the Salts, Len Fisher, Town Clerk**

- Seaford Town Council took over running of Crouch in April 2005.
- Lewes District Council administers the maintenance via Wyevale and LDC on Town Council behalf.
- Town Council pay £57,780 each year in Maintenance.
- Town Council receive £2,300 income therefore expenditure each year on the Crouch is £55,480.
- £46,700 of that goes on grounds maintenance (i.e. football pitch & bowling green)
- Insurance for the Crouch is about £1,540 (Included within the £57,780)
- Some legal restrictions on the use of the site & sale of part of the site connected to covenants, but these can be overcome. However the Town Council do not envisage any sale of land or change of use.
- All booking fees for pitch hire go to Wyevale NOT Council.
- 18% of council tax in Seaford raised each year just goes on the Crouch (nearly 1/5<sup>th</sup>)

### **Current buildings & usage of the Crouch, Jackie Blackwell, Area Partnership Development Worker**

- Seaford Town Football Club. Licensed clubroom, changing rooms, kitchen & toilet facilities. \*\*
- Crouch Bowling Club. Changing facilities, kitchen & toilet. \*\*
- Rose garden – possible site of Peace Garden

- Rose garden – possible site of Peace Garden
- Fenced off disused land – Exchange Garden Project
- Mercread Youth Centre. Large hall, gym, toilets, kitchen area. \*\*
- STFC present stand (condemned for use)

\*\* Available for private hire.

## **Summary of visions from user groups/organisations**

### **Seaford Town Football Club (Reece Blackman)**

The club wish to erect new stand, once the existing stand has been demolished. To provide a small sided pitch within the recreational area as there is an increasing youth membership (currently 300) yet no facility to accommodate them at the Crouch. To extend the current clubhouse to adhere to FA regulations to include meeting room, referees changing facilities, covered walkway to pitch & improved disabled access. To create parking facilities at Bramber Road entrance to keep a harmonious relationship with local residents. To protect the club's assets through installation of CCTV. All of the above is needed for the club to remain within FA regulations and to inspire and develop the junior teams & the club itself.

### **Crouch Bowling Club (David Burleigh)**

The club has been in existence since 1935, it has 85 members with 113 social members. The Club wish to provide disabled access to the pavilion & grounds; to extend their kitchen area (planning permission already granted); to negotiate new lease with STC and to encourage new members & promote tourism to the gardens.

### **Mercread Youth Club**

In the absence of a representative Len Fisher spoke regarding the extension to the Club as vehicle access for this would come via the Crouch via a temporary road. The extension will slightly overhang into the gardens & would mean a removal of old floodlight. He stated that as part of the project he had requested to ESCC they demolish the present football stand as an 'in kind' contribution (this would cost £5K to do) plus a percentage contribution towards the replacement.

### **The Exchange Project (Lindsay Thomas)**

This is a new pilot project to turn the fenced off area next to the telephone exchange into a 'therapeutic & social garden' for gardening related activities, with spaces for growing, relaxing, socialising, playing and learning. They are presently working with three groups of people; young men just about to leave school; young parents and retired people. The main challenges they face presently are the lack of a water supply & security for the plot.

### **(SNAP) Seaford & Newhaven Action for Peace (Jack Barnes)**

This recently formed group started by Seaford Quakers, would like to see a small area within the town set aside as a 'Peace Garden'. This would be a place for peace & contemplation available for all to use. One of the areas the group are looking at is within the walled area of the Crouch gardens. The area would be no bigger than 5 sq metres to include planting and at centre, a 'peace pole' designed and made locally. The cost would be met by SNAP with ongoing maintenance met by the Town Council contract with Wyevale.

## **Unified Issues from Discussion**

From the general discussion, four main issues arose:

**1) Need for better signage to the Crouch and within the Crouch to the various facilities.**

All the representative groups agreed that this was necessary and a good way of increasing usage of the area. It was felt that finger post signs and directional signs could be used within the park and in the town itself. It was generally felt that signage should be a relatively quick and simple project for the Crouch. Lindsay from the Exchange Project stated they would like to put a sign on the gate that leads to their project.

**Action: Len Fisher to find out information regarding signage.**

**Lindsay to draw up short proposal for their signage for next community services committee meeting.**

**2) Increased security – CCTV**

All those present felt this was a key issue for the gardens. This would have to be discussed with the Police. It was suggested that perhaps a Friends of the Crouch Gardens/Neighbour Watch scheme could be established as a way of increasing local people's community responsibility for the park.

**3) Car parking (particularly for the Football Club)**

The Football Club would be taking this to Community Services Committee.

**4) Joint Capital Project – potentially combination of the Football Club & Bowling Club.**

It was discussed that the two clubs could unite. The clubs to co-ordinate their own discussions if they wish to further this proposal.

**Ways forward & next steps**

- Funding advice offered on a one-to-one basis for small scale internal improvements from Karl Parks, Funding Support Officer from South Downs CVS. Interested groups took details and will contact Karl direct.
- Distribution of report & summary to be made public via STC & on their website.
- Public Meeting at the Football Club in January (TBC) to be advertised in local press & on posters in the Crouch to assess public opinion on the unified vision.
- Organisation of a "Crouch Day" to publicise the gardens and its facilities (date to be arranged)
- Possibility of setting up a 'Friends of the Crouch' group to involve local residents and user groups
- STC to look into costing for signage.

## APPENDIX 1

### Building a Unified Vision for the Future of the Crouch Football Club: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007

#### Attendees

Cllr Ralph Taylor	Seaford Town Council (STC)
Len Fisher	Seaford Town Council
Jack Barnes	Seaford & Newhaven Action for Peace
John Tolhurst	Seaford Town Football Club
Cllr Tracey Willis	Seaford Town Council
Len Peach	Crouch Bowls Club
David Burleigh	Crouch Bowls Club
Ron Hemmings	Crouch Bowls Club
Louise Soper	Seaford Town Football Club
R J Knight	Seaford Town Football Club
Karen Ellingham	Seaford Town Football Club
Reece Blackman	Seaford Town Football Club
Cllr Roy Bennett	Seaford Town Council
Cllr Pat Bennett	Seaford Town Council
Karen Tolhurst	Seaford Town Football Club
Doris Grove	Exchange Project
Cllr Bob Brown	Seaford Town Council
Paul Ungood	Seaford Town Football Club
Cllr Jon Freeman	Seaford Town Council
Lindsey Thomas	Exchange Project
Emma	Exchange Project
PCSO Andy Jackson	Sussex Police