

Notes from a meeting with members of the Frodsham Youth Association, March 10th 2017

Peter Vickery, 11/03/2017

The meeting had been set up by Nic Mikoleizik following a meeting at Helsby High School as part of ensuring that the views and aspirations of young people are properly captured in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

A group of around 15 association members attended and were both enthusiastic and constructive.

I took along a map of the plan area, let the attendees look at it and after briefly outlining the purpose of the Plan and its focus on the future use of land between now and 2040, asked 3 questions of the group:

- What about Frodsham is special to you?
- What do you want to see protected?
- What changes would you like to see?

Before the session began I spoke with 3 members while the rest were being assembled. To the question, do you like living here? I got the response no – this being down near Saltworks. The mess and parking associated with the football activities were a prime reason but also the difficulties walking along Ship Street into town arising from parked cars and moving traffic. It is a long trek to get from that end of town to the High School. There is a widespread disappointment that there is no longer a High School in Frodsham, I got a negative reply to a question about enjoying the High School. The condition of the road down Dig Lane taken by cyclists on their way to school in preference to the Main Road – just putting “Mud on Road” signs on display was a poor alternative to keeping the road clean.

Following an introduction by Nic and my brief opening remarks, the main discussion followed the 3 questions in sequence, but inevitably jumped between all three as it unfolded. The following are my expanded jottings of the conversations under the 3 headings, hopefully amended by the attendees to make sure some important messages are captured.

Under the heading: What about Frodsham is special to you?

The primary schools

Because we're here

Everyone is special

The Youth Club

Subway (would also like a McDonalds and a KFC, with one dissenter – fast foods are not good for you)

Gym (I'm not sure whether this is something they would like or like to see changed / improved)

Feels safe

I live there

Bonfire night (the ones in Runcorn and Widnes are better)

Fun stuff, loads of clubs such as the scouts

Castle Park, almost unanimous agreement that it is a great place

Under the heading of things to protect:

Everything

The environment

The PCSO

Under the heading of changes, they would like:

Improvements to the Saltworks Farm area, currently unattractive because of the presence of spent needles and drugs and a bad area for the skate park

Loss of the Athletics Club seen as a big gap, would like a proper running track

Leisure centre seen as missing certain features such as a basketball court – the one at the top of Castle Park is remote, shared with a football court and is often dominated by older youths playing football to the exclusion of basketball players.

The loss of the green space (Greengate?) along Ship Street as an open area was regretted

Youth Café

Young Costas

Would love a spot for young people in the centre of town – there was disappointment that the Goods Shed development, which had included a space for exactly this, had not happened.

Castle Park Gates off Park Lane are locked too early (and I would add not opened early enough)

More places / cafes to eat

Indoor climbing centre

Change Sainsbury's into McDonalds

Trampoline Park indoor / outdoor

Swimming Pool (really strong support for this general feeling was that the Council(s) should try harder on this)

Basketball Court

New skate park

Another recreation centre (strong support for Townfield Lane site to be refurbished and not lost)

Youth club open for more days

More houses people can afford

Better infrastructure (paths etc.)

Black spots are: Gates Garage Crossing, Fluin Lane junction

Cars are the problem, not just parking, moving traffic and cars blocking the pavement

Footpaths – condition and lighting

Accessibility for families and older residents (note this is coming from young people)

Potholes and mud

Bike lanes – young cyclists seen as the big losers in traffic layouts

School run car parking at the High School – this puts cyclists at risk

A Primark outlet

Cinema, bowling, ice skating facilities – fed up with trekking to Cheshire Oaks

At this point the young folk went off to do other things, but two helpers, Mary and Jane asked for a discussion and I repeated the questions the youngsters had addressed.

Would like the various options on housing type etc. considered by the steering group to be tested on the community via a letterbox drop and give people the opportunity to make their views felt.

Parking – the current arrangements need improving

Walking at night – better lighting

Better maintenance of footpaths including the foliage that can negate the benefits of street lighting must be undertaken

Developments around the Mersey View, little understanding of what is going on, particularly about infrastructure – this was once a delightful picnic spot

Traffic up and down Belmont Road to the Forest Hills Centre – excessive speeds with no footpaths for protection

Belmont Road has a great community spirit – the Landlord of the Belmont gives the pub over to the residents once a year for a Macmillan's coffee morning

Footpaths along routes out of Frodsham to Manley and Kingsley poor/ /non-existent