

Cowley Area Forum Notes and Actions

Tuesday 18th October July 2011

Bullington Community Centre, Peat Moors

www.oxford.gov.uk



Topic: Community Facilities in Cowley

Introduction

This Cowley Area Forum focused on 'Community Facilities in Cowley' and was an opportunity for local people to come along and help shape your local neighbourhood. There was a small display on the community facilities that are already available in the Cowley Area which people were able to look round it when they arrived. The focus for the forum discussion was then on:

1. What community facilities are available in the Cowley Area? How well are they used?
2. Are there any gaps in the facilities offered, e.g. young people/old people etc?
3. What facilities would most help improve community life in the Cowley Area?

What participants said like about Community Facilities in Cowley

- There are many parks and open spaces.
- Temple Cowley Pool and Fitness Centre – people like to have somewhere locally to take the whole family where they can keep fit, that is accessible to all members of the community, especially older people.
- Having the pool, library, and school together on one site that provides valued community facilities.
- The shopping centre is an accessible, warm and sheltered place where people can shop in their neighbourhood, meet up with each other etc.

What participants think would improve community life in Cowley

- Improve facilities for young people. One idea is to start up a youth brass band – which is ready to start but needs a venue and some funding.
- Engage young people to get their views on what community facilities they would like to see in the area.
- Provide more space to hold community activities such as children's parties, lunch clubs etc.
- Retain the current sport and health facilities at Temple Cowley Pool and Fitness Centre and reinstate the diving pool.
- Use existing facilities more effectively. Some centres and venues are struggling to keep going and could cooperate with others to develop activities and attract more people.

- It is difficult to get information about community facilities so it would be good to make information more widely available about the existing venues and the activities that are being held. This information could be gathered and displayed, e.g. in Templar Square or the community space in the Barn's Road Development.
- Ensure that the new community rooms in the Barn's Road development (to be 180 sqm or over 50% bigger than the hall at the Bullingdon Centre) offer additional facilities for the community in collaboration with the other community organisations and venues.
- Improve fitness and leisure activities for the over 50s, especially those without music (e.g. circuit training) and for isolated older people who might find it difficult to get out as much.
- Ensure that new developments balance the new housing with the provision of community facilities especially where existing facilities are at risk, e.g. the Lord Nuffield and Conservatives Club sites.

Actions to take forward

This note will be circulated and a working group will be set up (including city and county councillors, council officers, local community groups and interested residents) to take forward the following areas:

Improve access to information about community facilities:

- Collect information about all the community facilities and activities available in the Cowley area and make this widely accessible to residents. Ideas for how this could be done include displaying it in Templar Square or the new Barn's Road community space, setting up a community website and the possibility of establishing a Cowley Community Newspaper.

Improve cooperation between community facilities:

- Arrange a meeting with those running existing facilities to see: what facilities are being offered; how they are being marketed; how centres could coordinate better; and how they could offer the best variety of facilities to the community whilst remaining financially viable. This includes developing proposals for the use of the community rooms in the new Barn's Road development to meet the needs and priorities of residents.

Review and improve facilities for young people:

- There are limited facilities for young people in the Cowley Area. It is proposed to establish a youth action panel, including young people, to review what's on offer and how this could be improved. Fundraising proposals may need to be developed to support this.

Review provision of local recreational facilities:

- Assess and review the accessibility of local recreational facilities and how they meet local people's needs.