



**Sunniside Business Forum**  
**thePlace, Athenaeum Street, Sunniside**  
**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2009**  
**Meeting Notes No. 3**

**Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ali Parvez, thePlace Café, Jamie from C&C Design, Gareth Davies from Rufus and Gary Hutchinson from Sunderland Football Club.

**The Previous Minutes**

Les Scott introduced himself as chairman and asked if anyone would like to comment on the notes from the previous meeting.

Emily Taylor, Communication Manager, updated the forum on the Sunderland Live Events. Emily said that a number of business have scheduled events as part of the Sunderland City Council events programme. These events have been advertised and published in the Council's Sunderland Live flyer, 10,000 will be distributed across Sunderland. Local press and Radio Newcastle have expressed an interest in coming to speak to Sunniside businesses about their events.

Emily went on to explain that she is talking to participating Explore Sunniside card businesses. Some businesses are finding the cards more useful than others. Eauzone and thePlace café take the card regularly. New poster advertisements can now be viewed at metro stations across the city. Emily is contacting businesses for an update and the card will be rolled out for another six months.

Leslie said that he had noticed a lot of interest in hotels in the area. Emily explained that Sunniside is getting a lot of publicity due to this.

Leslie asked if there was anything happening on August bank holiday weekend and were there any updates on a farmers market? Louise Hardy, City Centre Manager, explained that there are plans to have a farmers market but no firm dates have been set as yet.

Ben Hall, Sunniside Partnership, updated the group on street improvement work in the area. Tenders have been sent out this week and the contract will be awarded in June with a start date in July. Ben confirmed that developments will work around the current HSBC scaffolding and that work will stop over the Christmas period.

Leslie Scott explained that he is participating in a fund raising projects for the Sunderland Sports Fund. The aim is to raise money to support young and up and coming athletes. Local businessman and owner of Candyman want to get into the charity sweet market. The launch is 15<sup>th</sup> June, 10am at Eauzone.



### **Update from the Police**

Northumbria Police were represented by Paul Thompson and Bob Smith. The police confirmed that they will soon have an office at thePlace and that terms and conditions are being discussed. The neighbourhood team will be extended in July.

Recently skateboarders were moved from Sunniside Gardens. A local office worker came out and spoke to the Officers and challenged their decision to move the skateboarders. The police asked the forum members for their response to this.

Ben from Sunniside Partnership and attendees at the meeting agreed that the skateboarders could use the gardens providing that no damage was being done.

The police noted that drinking in the gardens is becoming an issue, especially as the weather gets warmer. There have also been reports about groups hanging round and the rear of various premises in the area. Police are patrolling in these areas between 4-7pm.

Les Scott asked how strongly the no-alcohol zone is being enforced. The police informed that the drinkers will receive a warning which can lead to arrest. The drinkers need to be stopped every time as they will eventually get sick of being disturbed and stop.

The police urged all businesses to report incidents by ringing **0345 6 043 043**.

### **Graeme Miller, Skills Broker, Business Link**

Graham explained that he specialises in skills and staff development in business. There is funding available for training. Graham can be contacted on **07899 994 457** or by emailing **graeme.miller@businesslinknortheast.co.uk**

### **Neil Sowerby, Business Link**

Neil Sowerby said that the Web Design Event on 30<sup>th</sup> April went well. 20 attended. Neil also explained that there is still funding available for marketing, website etc. assistance and he can be contacted on **0771 239 7805**.

### **Emily Taylor, Communication Manager**

Emily informed the forum that Sunniside Partnership has been involved in the Echo's Sounds Xplosive competition with Greenhouse Music. This is aimed at finding new talent and up and coming bands and is part of the Sunderland Live Festival, which has been attracting a lot of publicity.

There has been a lot of media coverage on Sunniside in local press recently. Local businesses have been joining forces to promote themselves via competitions etc, which is good to see.



Emily informed that the North East Festival of Architecture has widened its remit to include Sunderland. There will be events held at thePlace the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Bill Fontana is one of the artists that have been commissioned to carry out an art installation in Sunniside; he will be a key note speaker on June 25.

#### **Discussion topics for the next meeting**

Leslie felt that it would be useful to have a Sunderland Live debrief from Gary Hutchinson from Sunderland Football Club. He also requested an update from Louise Hardy on the Yuletide Wishes Christmas planning for 2009. Leslie also requested an update on recent planning applications from Keith Lowes from Sunderland City Council. Ben said that he could provide an update if Keith was unable to attend.

Alan Ritchie from Richard Reed Solicitors stated that he would like to be kept in the loop more and that more should be done to keep the professional businesses in the area updated.

He went on to say that there are a number of smokers gathering in the area at the top of Frederick Street (at the back of the BT Building). He suggested no smoking areas outside the building. Ben informed that a form of ashtray will be installed with the street improvements.

Helen from Adorable Angels said that there is a lot of litter blowing round the Gardens at the moment. Ben will report this to the Council.

Phil Shakeshaft from Futurist informed that he has organised a network event on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Rufus, Quayside Exchange Building from 5.30pm-7.30pm. This is a relaxed, informal event for Hendon, East End and Sunniside businesses to attend.

Kam Chera from Amore explained that he has recently launched an Amore Facebook page. His business has its own profile and he now has almost 500 friends after only a month. This has made a massive difference to his business. Twelve<sup>2</sup>, Adorable Angels and Eastern Dreams also informed the forum that they have a Facebook page. Kam suggested an Explore Sunniside Facebook site which all Sunniside businesses could link to.

Ben Hall, Sunniside Partnership updated the forum on Sunniside Partnership projects. He explained that Wilson's Shopfitters and an old hostel will be demolished. Properties on Nile Street are being let to creative businesses to give a sense of activity. Properties on Villiers Street will also be demolished within 12 months.



There is still a lot of developer interest in the area and a new development framework has been set for the area between Sunniside Gardens and the ring road. The planning framework includes sites earmarked for family housing. Other facilities similar to thePlace are being considered.

Andrew Tucker from Job Linkage explained that his colleague Julie Best attended the previous meeting. Job Linkage is in the process of developing a hospitality training course aimed to get the unemployed into work. The course is planned to be 3 weeks long covering customer service skills and food and hygiene knowledge. Each employer that participates in the scheme will have input into how their course is organised.

Andrew asked local restaurants to get involved and asked that they fill out a questionnaire about the course. Sheila will send a list of restaurant contacts to Andrew and distribute information to attendees.

Ben Hall explained that a food and drink training company have requested to open a restaurant in Sunniside, similar to Jamie Oliver's Fifteen. He said that the food served in the restaurant would be well subsidised and therefore very cheap and said that this could put other local food and drink establishments at risk. Kam Chera from Amore said that all competition is good competition and that people tend to go to restaurants two or three times a year and that all trade would spread in Sunniside. It may be a good thing.

**Date and location of next meeting**

Sheila will arrange the next forum for mid July.