

YardArts Meeting – 29th June 2018
Shirehampton Methodist Church

Chair: Darren Jones MP
YardsArts – Liz and Christos
Karakal (site landowner)– Matthew

Background:

Darren Jones arranged a community meeting to discuss development plans for the Karakal site on Penpole Lane in Shirehampton on Friday, 29th June. This followed contact from over 450 constituents who shared their feedback with Darren on the proposal. The majority were against the plans, or at least what we knew of them at the time of writing, and wanted to find out more.

The owner of the Karakal site has submitted a planning application for 20 self-store units.

YardArts are yet to submit a planning application for their use of the site.

Notes:

More than 50 residents were in attendance.

Darren started the meeting with a roundup of the survey results, noting 450 responses and advised the active concerns were around three areas:

- dangers posed by the tricky road junction
- parking
- planning policy, residential use and green space considerations

Residents were advised that **all** works carried out on-site thus far have been carried out under Bristol City Council's permitted development policies. Separate Planning Applications had not been required.

YardArts outlined their plans, if permission is granted to develop the site, and how the proposed circus activity teaching programmes would benefit local young people.

Christo, MD YardArts, introduced the project which hopes to build an event space for circus skills performances carried out by local children and teenagers who train with YardArts and perform for parents/visitors etc. Alongside this will be a small 'street' of artist studios (wood engravers, jewellers etc) built of wood and non-permanent in structure, and 20 pitches for caravans, with electric hook-up for performer dwellings.

Liz, YardArts (YA) Planning Manager, detailed the planning application process, which is not yet open to comments. Her main point was to advise that the initial application is for a two-year period only, there will be the option to re-apply for a full ten years after this trial period.

Questions from the floor:

1: The project contains a residential element; however, this is not in the planning application.

YA: in consultation with the planners, recreational and leisure use covers all YA aims.

2: There used to be a fair once a year which brought noise, ASB and petty crime. What guarantees does YAs have to counter this?

YA: Through their experience in running the same project in other areas of Bristol, e.g. Kingsdown - ASB has reduced, certainly around the area because of the 24hr presence of working professionals.

3: How will YA control the artists? The area is quiet so other local residents do not need a 24/7 presence to regulate the area.

YA: There is a 20-pitch limit and artists are interviewed by the company before arriving, so it is not 'a free for all'. The outreach programmes are run in conjunction with school support and will benefit the wider community.

4: How will YA schedule event timings as the area is already busy with the cricket club?

YA: activities are run in the daytime and evening shows end by 10pm – they are not amplified so all music is quiet by nature.

5: Local people like to use the space, so why are others coming in? There are also local housing issues.

YA: regarding housing issues, they can't solve that problem.

6: Concerned that lip service is being paid to community opinions, but ignoring their wishes – e.g. tree cutting and walls being put up.

YA: This was done in conjunction with the council and carried out by the landowner. The space is currently designated a carpark.

7: Events are advertised on the website and open to all. How will YA control incomers and stop squatters?

YA: This has not been a problem in other areas so we don't anticipate it here.

8: How would YA mitigate ASB from people watching performances?

YA: They would use their established system from other venues and work hard to ensure good behaviour from the audience.

9: Concerned that the development would be visible from the War Memorial.

YA: They will be wooden huts that will blend into the background as much as possible. There will also be landscaping around each pitch.

10: Concerns re parking. Only 10 spaces provided, but cricket matches take up spaces everywhere on the Penpole Lane already – this will be more demand on top.

YA: Already contacted the cricket club to work around their schedule.

11: Kingsweston House already has a café so another is not needed. Also, there is a travellers site half a mile away so why not perform there?

YA: Performers are not travellers, they are working professionals. The traveller site is not fit for purpose and only allows for three month stays.

12: Karakal (Warehouse/ sports equipment business) are close to the site so YA might impact on ease of deliveries etc.

YA: They are confident the site does not impact on access to Karakal.

13: Has an Environmental Impact Study and Heritage Study been carried out?

YA: They have spoken to the planners and no biodiversity study was required. They have outlined in their plans that the site will be low impact, with permaculture, landscaping etc already integrated into development plans.

14: Query re the siting of the new coach and portacabin

Matt (Karakal): all works are his responsibility, not YA, and have been done in conjunction with the council's permitted development.

15: Nobody likes change, or the way it feels if it has been forced onto residents. Concerned over light pollution, recycling and rubbish collection, development residents paying taxes.

YA: The noise and light pollution has been addressed in the planning application, and its impact is rated as too low to be included in a separate submission. A private company has been engaged to take all rubbish and recycling away. The artists are independent professionals and will pay tax accordingly, however it is their concern as self-employed individuals rather than YA.

16: What will YA provide for teenagers and young people?

YA: They aim to bring out talent in young people that aren't necessarily sporty, empowering them by teaching new skills and confidence in their abilities.

17: How will YA be funded?

YA: Some events are charged, but at low cost because the organisation is set up as low profit. They will apply for Arts Council Funding and hold joint fundraising events with charities such as Riding for the Disabled/Avonmouth Riding for the Disabled and split the proceeds.

18: Why not consult the community before approaching YA?

Matt (landowner): After the previous planning applications failed, he offered to sell the site to KWAG or a residents group but no funding was raised.

At the end of the meeting, Darren advised he would update residents via his website, social media and the Shire Column (if publications timings align) once planning consultation opens.

<End of meeting>