

February 2012

Dear Resident,

You may be aware that last spring there was a problem with rough sleepers using the triangle of derelict land between Alcliffe Rd and the canal (opposite the end of Regent Street), and associated anti-social behaviour causing nightly disturbance to local residents. We raised this at the time with police at a monthly PACT meeting, and the police and city council subsequently worked together to achieve an eviction.

The land is the responsibility of the city council because they rent it from British Waterways on a long lease that doesn't expire until 2070. The council attempted to negotiate out of this lease last year, but British Waterways doesn't want the land back as it provides them with rental income and is a liability in its current state.

The police recommended that the land be fenced off to prevent a recurrence of the problem, but we think that this is the wrong approach as it would add to the unsightly nature of the area, would not prevent access to the determined, and would be spending money to go backwards - missing an opportunity to create an enjoyable public space.

Our proposal is that in the first instance the area should be opened to the towpath by removing the dividing wall (much of which is already in poor condition), and the small building bounding Aldcliffe Road should be demolished, creating a much less enclosed space that would feel safer and more public. Some work to thin out trees and tidy up the site generally would complete this phase.

A second phase might involve for example natural play features and/or planting fruit bushes and trees, and would hopefully include a use for the lean-to building at the back of the site - ideas are welcome.

We will be holding a public meeting on the site at 2pm on Saturday 25th Feb to discuss our proposals, and we would be particularly interested to meet or hear from people who would like to help work up plans and turn their ideas into a reality.

Yours Sincerely,

Cllr Dave Brookes, Dukes Ward, 07817 966949, dbrookes@lancaster.gov.uk
Cllr Jon Barry, Castle Ward, 844113, jbarry@lancaster.gov.uk