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## BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

### Beeston Forum General Meeting - 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

#### Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speakers, Philip Joyce, Metro and Chris Powell, First Leeds (please note that Councillor James Lewis had originally been invited to represent Metro. He ceased to be the Chairman of Metro upon his appointment as a Deputy Leader of Leeds City Council, and was succeeded by Councillor Keith Wakefield, who is unable to be present at the meeting. Additionally, it had been expected that Jon Tubby of Leeds City Council would attend the meeting to make a presentation about pollution. Regrettably, circumstances which arose very shortly before the meeting have compelled his withdrawal from this engagement )
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015
6. Police Report
7. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan
8. Report of the Committee meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015
9. Correspondence
10. Any Other Business

Members of the Forum are reminded that the next meeting of the Forum will take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November, as the Committee has taken the view that it is not appropriate for the Forum to meet on bonfire night.

## Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the Chair), Mr. R. Bell, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr.K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mrs J. Bush, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. A. Cooper, D. Craven, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. M. Dean (Leeds City Council) , Mrs. B. Draper, Mr. J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, Sgt. C. Godfrey (West Yorkshire Police) , Mr. K. Hewson, Mr. J. Hook, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. P. Lewis, Mrs. L. Lewis, D. McGough, A. McGrath, Mr. J. Morton, Miss. E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, PC M. Pashley (West Yorkshire Police), Mr. G. Turton and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting . She apologised for the fact that the usual minutes and agenda document would not be available. She acknowledged that she had overlooked collecting them from the premises of Health for All (Leeds) who had printed them, and accepted full responsibility for this situation .

2. Apologies for absence were received from Gohar Almass, , Bill Birch , Jean Birch, Stuart Casserley, Mary Dinsdale, Councillor Angela Gabriel, Colin Hendrick Ward, Arthur Kirby, Myra Munro and John Peckham

3. Guest Speakers- Christine Thornton introduced our Guest Speakers; Simon Booker , Senior Engineer, Traffic Engineering, Leeds City Council who would discuss traffic management in connection with the forthcoming Rugby World Cup matches at Elland Road and Rt.Hon Hilary Benn MP

3.1 Simon Booker noted that he is a Senior Traffic Engineer and observed that he is representing Leeds City Council, Leeds United FC and England Rugby 2015. He noted that the Rugby World Cup kicks off on 18<sup>th</sup> September . There has been lots of planning by England Rugby 2015 and the clubs and cities involved including Leeds. He explained that the basic premise is business as usual in terms of normal match days at Elland Road. The normal post game road closures will be implemented enabling car parks to empty and traffic to move easily. The games would be played on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September , each with a 2.30 kick off . The games would present a completely new, and different audience , to that presented by Leeds United FC . There will be some wide ranging traffic management processes to direct members of the public to go to places to park and to travel. There will be two park and ride facilities, as well as a massively enhanced shuttle bus operation. He noted that the normal shuttle bus service operates from Sovereign Street and parks in the bus depot beside the ground. There are usually six vehicles depending on the demand , but there would be 20 buses operating in connection with the Rugby World Cup matches , with 10 more buses on standby if the numbers demand this. Large numbers of spectators would be travelling by train, and would take up a large proportion of the ground capacity . There would be two Park and Ride facilities . One would be located at the end of Sweet Street , close to Halfords. An agreement has been secured with the owners of the land to use this as a Park and Ride. The bus operator would transfer from that car park to the Depot. The second Park and Ride site will be at Woodhouse Moor from where there will also be a bus service. However, unlike most if not all of the other venues , there will be some at venue parking. At other venues, all the normal at venue parking will be taken up by production teams, stalls etc., but a deal has been brokered with England Rugby 2015 to retain some at venue parking. As much as possible of the parking will be off street. He noted that constant messages have been issued by the organisers of the Rugby World Cup , Leeds City Council, and bus and train operators to book travel and car parking as soon as possible . The aim is to cater for as many people as possible in a controlled manner . Lots of work has been done in the past 12 to 24 months to ensure that the lives of people living around the ground can go on in a normal manner . The club will be the operators of the post match traffic management ; timescales will be determined by the time taken to exit the ground. For a normal football match, there is a lot of activation. However, rugby crowds trickle out of the ground, whereas football crowds leave en masse. It is hoped to open up the roads more quickly , but it remains to be seen whether this will be possible . John Hook noted that for the recent Rugby League Cup Final , it had taken him two hours to travel from Wembley Stadium to the nearest main road. Simon Booker said that some signage would go up to warn members of the public about match day traffic, urging those travelling to find alternative routes avoiding Elland Road, Wesley Street, the Ring Road and other streets in the area. This works for some big events so that traffic can flow easier. So far as the Rugby World Cup is concerned, we are catering for a different demographic.

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst topics covered were the amount of car parking space available, the cost of car parking, issues arising from traffic at the Ingram Distributor, the likely attendance at the matches ,the likely extent of on street car parking and enforcement of parking restrictions

4. Christine Thornton then invited our next guest speaker, Rt.Hon. Hilary Benn MP to address the Forum

4.1 Hilary Benn thanked the Forum for its invitation and noted that this is the first time since the General Election that he has appeared at a Forum meeting. He noted that it is a huge honour to have been re elected and stressed that he is here to represent everyone. He noted that he holds seven surgeries per month including one at Beeston Library between 5.15 pm and 6 15 pm on the fourth Friday of each month. Hilary Benn added that his constituents are more than welcome to see, write to, or e mail him. Hilary Benn then addressed a number of local issues. The planning application by Aspiring

Communities for the site of the Ice Pak factory had been discussed at some length when Hilary Benn last appeared at the Forum. He noted that the application had been intended to be considered at the Plans Panel meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> August, but was then withdrawn from the agenda. He noted that officers are looking at the planning application and are due to come back in the next few weeks, but this is uncertain. With regard to the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum, he referred to the visit by Neighbourhood Forum members to Wolverhampton, and added that he would like to hear how the Neighbourhood Forum is going. He noted that there had been a good piece in South Leeds Life (which, he praised as a wonderful resource with lots of news) about the Neighbourhood Forum.

Hilary Benn then turned to the issue of the Syrian refugees. He noted that this had been an issue for the last few days and weeks, and noted that he has received a lot of correspondence in the past couple of days. He said that when he sees a photograph such as that on the front page of newspapers, he feels ashamed, and added that all of us should feel ashamed that in Europe, people who are fleeing persecution and violence find themselves in desperate circumstances when finding shelter. He referred to a family who had lived in Damascus, then moved to Aleppo, then tried to go to Ramadi before going to Turkey. Hilary Benn invited the audience to imagine a situation in which there is violence in Beeston which is happening to Forum members and their families. Imagine people seeking refuge in Wakefield, but being forced to move to, say, Nottingham, after Wakefield is bombed. Hilary Benn said that desperate parents will do anything to get safety and security. We must do something about the causes of conflict. He noted that the responsibility falls on neighbouring states, but many of them are arming and supporting one side or another. Hilary Benn praised the government which had been the second most generous donor to humanitarian causes in Syria. He noted that people in Syria are crossing the border to Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. He noted that the population of Jordan had risen by 25% and asked his audience to imagine a situation in which the population of the UK had risen by 25%. There is a feeling right across the political spectrum that we need to do more.

4.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst issues dealt with were traffic in the vicinity of Leeds City Railway Station, the possibility of a spur on the railway at Elland Road and railway stations at the White Rose Centre or Elland Road, the usage of the Park and Ride facility at Elland Road, the Syrian refugee crisis, the current leadership election in the Labour Party

## 5. Police Report

5.1 PC Matt Pashley reported the crime statistics since the last meeting. There had been twelve burglary dwellings; a high figure, but three suspects had been arrested for two of the burglaries. In addition, the police believe that five of the burglaries are connected, and the details of three suspects have been circulated. There have been two thefts of motor vehicles and three thefts from motor vehicles. There have been two robberies; one arrest has been made. It was noted that the police intend to combat speeding vehicles. It is intended to use a speed indication device which displays a smiling or frowning face, as appropriate. PC Pashley asked whether the community would like to become involved. Christine Thornton noted that she is the Chairman of the Environment Task Group for the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum, and that Councillor Adam Ogilvie had contacted Acting Inspector Arrowsuch to ask whether members of the task group could borrow a new machine intended to combat speeding vehicles. Sgt Claire Godfrey noted that the police had been given a number of dates by Adam Ogilvie, but they are still sorting out a number of details including the areas in which it would be used.

5.2 The discussion then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Dennis Bottomley noted that there have been complaints about parked cars in a number of residential streets. Sgt Godfrey noted that the police are working alongside the group. PC Pashley noted that there are already traffic calming measures on Dewsbury Road so additional action would serve no purpose.

5.3 A member of the audience was aware that a lady had been posting car numbers on facebook, and added that a number of cars have been set on fire. Sgt Godfrey noted that this has been going on for a lot longer than four weeks. She added that crime figures are presented in a form laid down by the government and are based on serious and acquisitive crime. It was noted that a car has been smashed into an OAPs property. Adam Cooper noted that this is part of an ongoing family feud and asked whether anything would be done about this situation. Christine Thornton noted that another car on Cross Flatts Avenue had been set on fire. Sgt Godfrey noted that a team of detectives will be looking at all offences relating to the family feud over the past 18 months. Arrests have been made in the past week, but she is in no position to give any details. Adam Cooper described the situation as beyond a joke. PC Pashley noted that a special team had been set up. Christine Thornton said that this is reassuring. She acknowledged that the police are not in a position to give details, but local residents need to know that they are on the case as they fear for their own safety. Sgt Godfrey noted that the police inquiry is being led by officers of such seniority that they can do something about this. Adam Cooper commented that the police must now have enough evidence, and asked whether they can sort this out before someone gets hurt. Sgt Godfrey noted that PCs and PCSOs from other areas had been drafted into the area and there have been increased patrols in the

Cross Flatts Area to provide reassurance and look out for criminals. Christine Thornton described the perpetrators of these actions as gangsters and compared them to the mafia. She said that these things should not be happening in Beeston. A member of the audience asked why arson is not treated as a serious crime. Sgt Godfrey said that arson does not fall into the categories covered by the crime statistics. She stressed however that such crimes are still allocated to an officer, but added that if the police reported every offence, this would include minor offences as well as important ones.

5.4 Richard Bell noted that the Neighbourhood policing website had been left without being updated. He asked whether anything would be done about this. Sgt Godfrey noted that the website is managed by a support team. She cannot say why it had not been updated recently. She added that burglary dwellings are high for the area, noting that there have recently been a large number of burglaries in the Allenbys and Suthleighs. She noted that people in the area have been putting up warning notices. However, crime has fallen week on week and there have been extra patrols. The burglaries are 'sneak in' burglaries, resulting from insecure doors and windows. She noted that police had noticed insecure windows on patrols. There has been one arrest of a person who has been charged with three burglaries and remanded. The number of burglaries has since fallen. It was noted that a car would have been needed for the burglaries, if the burglar is not local. Sgt Godfrey said that there have been three burglaries in the Grovehalls, focussed on one side. It was noted that the peak times for burglaries is 1p.m to 5p.m and 1 am to 4p.m. It was good that a computer system is working out where the targeted areas. Extra traffic patrols are determined by the police's central office in Wakefield. Sgt Godfrey noted that the police are aware of the problem with burglaries and are working on it. Several burglaries have forensics and fingerprints linked to them; there are no dead ends

5.5 John Cunningham wondered whether the police are making any provision in connection with the Rugby World Cup matches. He noted that the police had said that whilst football fans are predictable, rugby fans are unpredictable and anything can happen. He added that 'boisterous fun' might be perceived by the public as intimidation. Sgt Godfrey noted that she is unaware of the exact plan, but said that the police would create a policing plan based on intelligence; specifically, what has happened in previous matches. Extra officers will be working to the plan in place. The plan should cover this area but she could not definitely say that it does. Christine Thornton said that it is reassuring that the police are taking crime seriously, but she is concerned that crimes were not taken seriously previously. Hilary Benn noted that the more complaints there are, the more likely it is that the police will focus attention on issues which had been the subject of the complaints. The police are often unable to discuss their activities, but this does not mean that nothing is happening. The police must have sufficient evidence to find an accused guilty. This takes time and sounds horrendous

## 6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Forum.

6.1 Greg Turton noted that there had been a meeting of the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum on 1<sup>st</sup> September. With regard to finance, the Neighbourhood Forum's grant application had been approved and the Forum would now be able to spend money up to £4980, which would have to be spent within six months. A bank account is being opened with Unity Bank, in which would be deposited funds from other sources. We are in the process of securing MICE money from our councillors and a grant from the Community Fund. With regard to our consultant, Greg Turton noted that we are in the process of arranging planning workshops with our consultant Shaun Hanson. The workshops will, hopefully, take place in September and October, and will be aimed principally at Committee members and task group members. Greg Turton noted that a meeting with Council Officers had taken place on 28<sup>th</sup> April. He noted that the Neighbourhood Forum is still waiting for a statement from the Council about the meeting, even though it had been requested twice. Martin Dean, of Leeds City Council confirmed that the note which had been produced by the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum is a good note. Greg Turton also explained that he had recently attended a meeting to discuss the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will replace section 106 payments. It was noted that CIL is paid by developers and can be used to finance further development in an area. The meeting incorporated a number of workshops and briefings. Amongst other topics discussed are the relationship between Community Committees and Neighbourhood Forums.

6.2 Greg Turton then explained a venture with a number of Beeston traders. A 2016 calendar will be produced and twelve traders had signed up to be involved. The calendar will promote the Beeston Plan. It was noted that independent traders are the lifeblood of the community. A photoshoot had taken place in Cross Flatts Park. A vision statement for the Beeston Plan had been approved at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> September. A skills audit of committee members has been carried out.

6.3 With regard to planning issues, Greg Turton noted that he had felt that following deferral of the consideration of the Aspiring Communities planning application for the former Ice Pak premises, the Neighbourhood Forum should consider its position. He felt that the failure to determine this planning application is obstructing the Neighbourhood Forum's work. Accordingly, he had called a Special Meeting of the Neighbourhood Forum Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> August. The committee meeting resolved unanimously to seek an explanation from Leeds City Council for the deferral of the planning application, and why the site visit had taken place when the item had been withdrawn from consideration by the meeting of the plans panel. Leeds City Council were also informed that the Neighbourhood Forum had written to the Secretary of

State, Greg Clark MP, to ask where we stand. The letter states 'Beeston Neighbourhood Forum understands the process involving neighbourhood forums is still fairly new and feels that clarification is needed by the Secretary of State about its status within the planning process and its relationship with the planning authority; a situation that has been brought to the fore by the failure to determine the application in question. In reality, this long delay is not allowing BNF to proceed with its statutory role of developing policies for inclusion in a neighbourhood plan.' There has, as of yet, been no reply from the Secretary of State. However, Leeds City Council had given what Greg Turton considers is a poor reply, in which they defended the site meeting, describing it as a 'closed meeting' and saying that there is no reason why it should not have gone ahead. Greg Turton noted that the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum had pointed out that official objectors to the application had not been informed about the situation. The Neighbourhood Forum are not happy, and had requested Leeds City Council not to determine the planning application until clarification had been obtained from the Secretary of State. Greg Turton was asked from the audience whether Leeds City Council had explained the withdrawal of the application from the Plans Panel agenda. Greg Turton noted that Leeds City Council had explained that the application had been due to be considered by the Plans Panel meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> August, but had been withdrawn from the agenda following internal discussion. Officers stated that further clarification of certain matters referred to in the officers report is needed. It is intended to have the application determined by a later plans panel meeting; the first such meeting will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> September. Leeds City Council explained that it is not uncommon for site visits to take place so that members of the panel can familiarise themselves with a site. Site visits, they say, are not open meetings and it is not expected that third parties are invited. Third parties can, instead, make representations about a planning application at a plans panel meeting. Leeds City Council explained that they had forwarded the letter to Ian Mackay, the Neighbourhood Planning Officer, for a reply.

5.4 A member of the audience noted that the planning application had been submitted in late 2014. Greg Turton noted that the application was submitted in October 2014, and that a timeline had been prepared of key events in the development of the Neighbourhood Forum, and of the planning application. A member of the audience noted that the application had taken months to be determined, and had then been pulled. Yesterday, she had learned that the application would be considered by the October plans panel, at the earliest. It was also noted that the applicants had been given time by Leeds City Council to respond to various requests for information. Leeds City Council had overindulged the applicant. Greg Turton noted that the guidance from the Department of Communities and local Government states that a major planning application should be determined within 13 weeks. A member of the audience noted that Leeds City Council had described the site meeting as a closed meeting, but the press were present and had taken photographs. Surely, that is an open meeting.

7. Aspiring Communities Planning Application. The meeting then turned to the issue of who will represent objectors at the plans panel meeting. Greg Turton understood that objectors have one speaking slot at the Plans Panel meeting and noted that the Beeston Community Forum had taken the view that he should have the slot. He felt that this view is quite right. One question which needs to be resolved is whether other objectors such as the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum and Save Our Beeston wish to shape that statement. Greg Turton noted that the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum is going through a process of setting up seven task groups including Housing and Regeneration (which is the most relevant to the task group). The Beeston Neighbourhood Forum had decided that it would provide a statement, which could be read by the Beeston Community Forum in its representations to the Plans Panel (providing of course, the Beeston Community Forum agrees). The statement draws on the letter to the Secretary of State. Greg Turton added that Christine Thornton is leading the Environment Task group which is now under way. Other groups are behind; indeed some groups, so far, have insufficient members to be viable. He wondered whether people can join such groups. He hoped to start the groups dealing with Housing and Regeneration and Opportunities for Young People. Jeremy Morton pointed out that the site visit is a closed meeting. No one can make representations about the planning application, whether supportive, or in opposition. The meetings are, however, open in the same sense that a council meeting is open to members of the public as observers. Adam Cooper noted that when it had been expected that the application would be determined by the Plans Panel meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> August, everything had happened so quickly. He had been asked to speak at the meeting on the Monday beforehand. He had told the Council of his intention to speak at the meeting on the following day; Tuesday. The statement which he would read out needed to be prepared and ready. Robert Winfield noted that following a resolution of the Forum Committee, he had written to Ian Cyhanko, the Planning Officer dealing with the application, informing him that the Beeston Community Forum, as the longest established group which had objected to the planning application, would like to be represented at the plans panel meeting at which the application would be determined and that the identity of the representative would be determined by the present Forum meeting. The letter also asked when the application would be determined. Richard Bell said that we cannot take a decision if we do not know when the Plans Panel meeting will be taking place. Christine Thornton suggested that we should have someone tentatively lined up. She added that the objection should be on purely planning grounds and recalled that the Forum had made representations at the pre planning hearing around 2 ½ years ago. Ken Hewson suggested that we appoint Adam Cooper, if he is willing to be appointed; however, Adam Cooper noted that he would be on holiday on 17<sup>th</sup> September. Christine Thornton said it was still possible that the

application would be determined on this date. She offered to nominate herself as the representative at the Plans Panel meeting if no one else wishes to do it. She added that the representative can only speak on behalf of the Beeston Community Forum. A member of the audience wondered whether it is possible for other objecting groups to make representations. Greg Turton said that he would ask whoever makes the statement to mention the position of the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum.

Adam Cooper noted that at the Plans Panel meeting, a representative of Aspiring Communities has the right to speak for three minutes. An objector also has the right to stand up and speak for up to three minutes. If, say four or five people put themselves forward, the three minutes is split between them. He recalled that at 5p.m on the Tuesday before the plans panel meeting, no one had put their name forward to peak against the Aspiring Communities planning application, so he put himself forward for this. He noted that we need clarity so that we understand who put their names forward.. Councillor David Congreve said that Adam Cooper is quite correct. An objector and an applicant have three minutes each, and if there is more than one objector, the three minutes is shared. A person wishing to speak must notify council officers of this intention in advance of the meeting. He pointed out that if you are focussed, you can get an argument across in three minutes. If more than one group is objecting, it is better that one person speaks on behalf of all the groups. Objectors are generally objecting on similar grounds. Richard Bell wondered whether this would apply for a planning application for a dauma window on a house. David Congreve said that an application for a dauma window would not be considered by the Plans Panel. Such an application would be determined by officers. David Congreve added that the allocation of three minutes to objectors applies to all planning applications. If a longer time limit is accepted for one planning application, it would need to be accepted for all planning applications. David Congreve added that the Panel will determine a planning application on planning grounds. The discontent of a group with the planning process is not planning grounds. At a panel meeting, objectors must object to the application, and stick to this; anything else will muddy the waters. He felt that there are other ways to pursue the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum's grievance. Greg Turton suggested that the Beeston Community Forum's planning statement should include a passage saying that the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum is asking for the application to be set aside until guidance has been received from the Secretary of State. Hilary Benn noted that he has served as the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. He felt that the Secretary of State would do no more than say what the law is. If the applicants are unhappy, they can do something about it. He echoed the advice of David Congreve, and felt that objectors should use the three minutes allocated to them to make objections on planning grounds; the only thing the plans panel will take account of. The proposal made by Greg Turton was put to the vote. There were five votes in favour and twelve against with three objections. Christine Thornton said that the Committee of the Forum will organise a statement as it had at the pre-planning meeting

8. Correspondence. Robert Winfield noted that he had received one item of correspondence; a letter from Peter Nuttall of Cockburn School, dealing with the academisation of a number of schools in the area. In view of the late time (it was 9.40p.m), the meeting voted to defer consideration of the letter to the next meeting.