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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 4th January 2018 Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Ratification of new Neighbourhood Forum members**
- 4. Guest Speaker- Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn, MP**
- 5. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 2nd November 2017**
- 6. Police Report**
- 7. Report of the Committee meeting held on 27th November 2017**
- 8. Correspondence**
- 9. Possible Co-option of Committee members**
- 10. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the Joint meeting of the Beeston Community Forum and Beeston Neighbourhood Forum held on Thursday 2nd November 2017

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mrs. S. Akhtar, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mrs. J. Birch, Mr. D. Blackburn, Mrs. J. Blackburn, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. S. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Mr. A. Cooper, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. C. Hendrick Ward, Mr. K. Hewson, Mr. J. Hook, Mrs. N. Hussain, Miss. P. Johnson, Mrs. P. Jones, Mr. E. Leatham, Mr. A. Mahmood, Miss. A. Miladinovic (Leeds City Council) Mr. J. Morton, Mrs. M. Munro, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, Rev. L. Pearson, Mr. H. Pritchard (Planning Aid), Mr. E. Wills (Planning Aid), Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks - Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting
2. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Bell, Councillor David Congreve and Arthur Kirby
3. Ratification of new Neighbourhood Forum members – there were no new members to ratify
4. Guest Speaker – Christine Thornton noted that it had been expected that a representative of Digital Angels

would be present at the meeting , but no such representative had so far turned up. Robert Winfield pointed out that all guest speakers receive an e mail setting out full details of the time and venue of the meeting including a full postcode, so that the venue should be easy to find. He added that the present venue is somewhat easier to find than Beeston Village Community Centre, which was located some distance away from the road

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2017. Ken Hewson wondered whether there is any reference in the minutes to suggestions that there should be a wider consultation area. After some discussion, the meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that the minutes be amended to include a reference to the issue which Ken Hewson had just raised . Mark Parry pointed out that paragraph 4.1 incorporates a reference to a designated area

6. Police Report- It was noted that no representatives of the Police Force were present

7. Neighbourhood Planning Workshop

7.1 A number of items of paperwork had been circulated to those present at the meeting. Abbie Miladinovic referred to the paper incorporating the draft vision statement . She suggested that the Forum may wish to build on the vision statement which had been drafted around two years ago, and develop this into a set of objectives which the Neighbourhood Forum can deliver . To this end, we could look at the surveys which had been taken at the Beeston Festival together with the surveys which had been completed by some local residents several years ago.

7.2 Abbie Miladinovic invited Forum members to consider five themes ; meeting local housing needs , street scene (tidying up, , storage and bins), green space , community facilities and connectivity (transport, walking and cycling). The intention is to turn the vision statement into objectives addressing these issues. Abbie Miladinovic asked Forum members to look at the second document ; which outlines a number of examples from other areas. The object is to take a vision and put it into a set of objectives . The Neighbourhood Plan falls under that framework. She called upon the members present to think about the five headings; for example what are the issues relating to meeting housing needs , and what can the Neighbourhood Plan do about this . Members should not worry about whether issues are planning or non planning . Members should seek to complete the statement ; in 2030, Beeston will be Members divided into smaller groups to discuss these issues.

7.3 Following this discussion, the groups reported back about their discussions relating to housing . Edward Wills said that his group had suggested that derelict buildings could be converted into houses, and that houses without garages should get them, although this is unlikely. People should be persuaded to use garages where possible. It was also suggested that there were too many rented houses . There should however be more affordable homes, and houses should have gardens. Pam Jones said that her group felt that we need to identify the current position and talk about whether housing is social housing , and what is needed to satisfy requirements. Some existing buildings could probably be converted into flats. She added that these issues are tied up with the transport situation ; a large number of new houses might increase congestion. Steve Francis said that his group's comments had , to some extent been covered by other groups. He noted that several months ago, the Forum had heard a presentation about the possible conversion of the site of the former Moorhouses Jam factory into housing . Since then, the Forum had heard nothing ; there had been no feedback from the developers or from Leeds City Council. We need more information as we cannot express opinions without it. . Abbie Mildinovic asked whether Forum members know about how to access planning applications. Steve Francis noted that we can use the planning portal but would prefer to hear directly from developers. Christine Thornton said that all new developments should have space for one car . Jean Birch said that there should be different types of houses for different circumstances. Christine Thornton felt that Leeds City Council should take account of local opinion when determining planning applications. She noted that those sending in planning applications are not given information about planning decisions so that often those submitting representations do not know whether the applications have been approved. She added that the Planning Department does not take things seriously . Edward Wills wondered whether someone could come to a future Forum meeting to explain how planning applications and representations are considered. Bill Birch felt that the planning department do not want to deal with us. . Christine Thornton felt that we should try to limit multi occupancy housing . Often one house is divided into

many flats ; in one case, a house was divided into 16 flats . Bill Birch noted that some back to backs had been divided into four flats. Christine Thornton noted that large houses in this area are prime for landlords to tun into large houses . Adam Cooper noted that Noster Hill has large houses; every one has about four or five different people , but this is not noticed. The only dwelling that people hear about is Omnibus which has 20 people living in it. He added that back to backs have about six or seven people living in a two bedroom house . Abbie Miladinovic said that it would be possible to introduce requirements such as that with a Neighbourhood Plan , providing there is local evidence as the conversion of housing into flats requires planning permission. In addition, complaints may be made to the Planning Enforcement Department. . Ken Hewson wondered whether such complaints can be made now. Abbie Miladinovic confirmed that they can. Pauline Johnson noted that she lives in a small back to back house , and that behind her is a larger house which could feasibly be converted into flats. She would not know about this. Harvey Pritchard noted that we would need to carry out a street by street survey, and that we need hard facts and figures. Houses might have been converted into flats but we would need to prove it. He wondered whether we have carried out a housing needs survey (for example how many young, single and aged people are there . We need evidence all along. Stuart Casserley asked about housing which has been left empty. Pam Jones felt that we need housing census. People have their own opinions but this depends on where they live. Abbie Miladinovic said that this is in the pipeline for the next few months . Lindsey Pearson wondered whether we could be shown how to carry out a housing needs survey . Christine Thornton said that we know whether we have a cross section of the community in terms of single people, disabled people, families with children and older people , but we can only speak about people whom we know personally . Harvey Pritchard said that if he were an independent examiner , he would not accept this case as there is no evidence to support it . Bill Birch asked why the Council had increased the size of schools and noted that this is because the Council know the demography of an area. Surely they could tell us . Abbie Miladinovic said that if the Neighbourhood Forum wants to ask for census information , it could contact Leeds City Council. Christine Thornton said that we had asked for this information but had never been given it . Mark Parry noted that he has lots of information in spreadsheets . Lindsey Pearson said that what is in the data is not always what people see on the ground. Pam Jones noted that there is a problem with reality and perception . Too many people perceive things in their own way and many people in Beeston have their own slant on issues. Some issues might be unique to one street. Lindsey Pearson said that she had got people at her church to say what is on their own street. She had done that and noted that it is amazing what you can see when walking around. Christine Thornton noted that she had started this exercise on her street but had not finished this. Adam Cooper noted that Christine Thornton lives along one of the longest streets in Beeston. Christine Thornton noted that she lives on Cross Flatts Avenue, not Cross Flatts Avenue, not Cross Flatts Grove. Pam Jones noted that everyone spends time debating issues and goes around and around and around. More people talk but no one seems to know the overall reality but we need to clarify this . Steve Francis noted that we all live in different parts of Beeston and suggested that we should sit down and put together working groups of different areas of Beeston. Abbie Miladinovic said that she would encourage this, and that would be a part of the plan. Edward Wills wondered who could say what information Leeds City Council holds , for example the number of houses in multiple occupation. Abbie Miladinovic noted that there is a local land and planning gazetteer .

7.4 There was then a discussion about Streetscene. Pam Jones said that her group had reached the conclusion that there should be planning restrictions to get uniformity in fencing and shopfronts , though not making them all the same . She noted that in some towns, everything seems to go together, for example fences cannot be more than a certain height. Lindsey Pearson said that we should want to make people proud of the area . We should encourage Beeston in Bloom which had done some wonderful work. We should also promote gardening and the care of privet hedges . It was also suggested that we could encourage children with these; they might then pester their parents! There could be better links with planning on these issues as well as joined up street cleaning . She noted that there is cleaning after Leeds United FC matches on Sunday mornings in areas close to the ground. We should strengthen these links and see how organisations can work together . Adam Cooper wondered whether there is any connection between the Primary Schools and Beeston in Bloom. He noted that he has been involved for ten years in the rebuilding and refurbishment of schools. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that Beeston in Bloom had undertaken work with St Anthony's School but working with schools is difficult if it is not on their agenda . Adam Cooper noted that gardening is on some curricula but there is little emphasis on this in schools in this area .

Getting this into childrens' mindset could have a knock on effect. Eddie Leathem noted that there is a garden in Hugh Gaitskell School. Christine Thornton felt that we need to educate older people. Rosemary Casserley felt that this is linked with multi occupancy Adam Cooper noted that many private landlords do not live in the area and many of them do not care as long as they are getting their money . Christine Thornton noted that tenants put out rubbish, not their landlords. Harvey Pritchard wondered whether there is a tenants and residents association in this area. Christine Thornton said that this forum effectively functions as a Tenants and Residents Association. It was noted that there was a Tenants and Residents Association on the Cardinal Estate but not any longer. . Christine Thornton noted that there is monitoring and enforcement in connection with rubbish and flytipping , and that any householder leaving rubbish outside their garden is considered to be flytipping. Myra Munro noted that a three piece suite had been dumped in Cross Flatts Park. Christine Thornton said that some people appear to believe that there are 'rubbish fairies' who take away rubbish , just as tooth fairies are said to take away teeth which fall out! Myra Munro said that she is not frightened about going to the tip. Pauline Johnson noted that a charge is made for disposing of large items of rubbish. Steve Francis referred to the former pocket park at Barkly Road . He noted that there had been vandalism at this site, but that Leeds City Council had responded by closing the facility rather than addressing the vandalism. Bill Birch noted that there had been drug use there. Christine Thornton noted that the late Jack Sharpe had raised a fuss about the issue.

7.5 The meeting then discussed green spaces. Edward Wills said that his group felt there are enough green spaces . Pauline Johnson felt that we do not want to lose what we have got. Christine Thornton said that Cross Flatts Park should be made more disabled friendly, and noted that disabled people cannot get up one side of the park. She added that we do not want houses on every bit of green space . Bill Birch noted that there are more people in the park and noted that in the past, the police and council rangers had sorted this out. He added that prostitutes and drug users use Beggars Hill . Myra Munro noted that there are drug users in the Multi Use Games Area at 8am and that this brings the place down. Bill Birch noted that enforcement is a problem . Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that it is possible to pay for more enforcement and this had actually happened in some areas. Myra Munro noted that Cross Flatts Park is a lovely park. Pam Jones said that she would not cross Cross Flatts Park at certain times of the day. Christine Thornton however said that it is not that bad .Myra Munro said that she does not go in the park because of drinking and drugs. People are out of their minds at 8 am . She felt that we need more control in parks. Colin Hendrick Ward said that when he was young, he lived in fear of the Park Ranger and said that there was no stepping out of line. Adam Cooper said that he had seen drunken men urinating against trees. Christine Thornton noted that when she had arrived at the meeting she had seen a young man urinating outside the venue . Steve Francis noted that there is a lovely network of footpaths in Beeston but none are wheelchair accessible. When he walks with his wife to Asda, this is not possible as they get bogged down. Similarly, the path at the side of the railway is inaccessible . Improvements to these footpaths would enhance the community as pushchairs could then use them.

7.6 The meeting then discussed community facilities . Edward Wills noted that his group had spoken about the loss of banks , shops and Post Offices. Steve Francis and Myra Munro noted that there are no longer any banks in this area . Edward Wills noted that premises are changing into takeaways and bookmakers . Pauline Johnson noted that we have lost the Post Office on Beeston Road. Bill Birch noted that the number of Post Offices in Beeston has fallen from four to one. He added that the local Leeds Building Society branch had also closed . Adam Cooper added that the Holbeck Sorting Office is under threat. Edward Wills said that there is a need for cafes . Myra Munro suggested that there could be eating out places and coffee houses. Angela Gabriel noted that there is a cafe but no one uses it! Sandra Burton said that she does not like posters on shop windows as people are unable to see inside them. They also look horrendous. Adam Cooper said that in some shops, stock overflows onto the pavement and this does not look good. Christine Thornton said that often, some of the pavement belongs to the shops. Angela Gabriel said that shops are permitted to put stock outside where they own the land. John Cunningham said that there is the best swimming pool in the country at John Charles Sports Centre but he wondered how people can get there . It was argued that a car is needed but Bill Birch pointed out that there is an infrequent bus service; no 481 .

7.7 The meeting then discussed transport. Edward Wills said that his group had concluded that there are good bus

routes. Myra Munro said that when buses turn up, they are good and that Beeston is a good area to get to . It is also possible to places such as Dewsbury, Morley , Ossett, Huddersfield and Roundhay Park. Christine Thornton said that it is difficult to travel from Beeston to Hunslet ; however John Hook referred to the no 12 bus service. Bill Birch asked Forum members to try travelling from Cottingley to Beeston. Steve Francis understood that the no 1 bus service to Beeston went on to Cottingley at weekends but Bill Birch understood that this had stopped . He added that Wesley Street was the only street with a bus shelter but no bus service, although 'Not in Service' buses frequently run along Wesley Street . Adam Cooper said that if services cannot make money , we will not get them. Lindsey Pearson felt that children should be encouraged to walk to school. She noted that there is no bus to Ruth Gorse School and that there is a problem with through traffic. Beeston has 25% less car ownership than other areas but through traffic causes problems . Traffic schemes must consider residents, not just getting people in and out of town. She added that there is a problem with the gritting of side roads in icy conditions and we need good neighbourliness to ensure that grit is applied . Bill Birch said that there is no joined up thinking between Leeds City Council and Highways England and that this had caused a mess up . In connection with the proposal to close junction 2a of the M621 and the narrowing of Dewsbury Road , it was clear that the two sides had not been speaking to one another. John Hook noted that the Highways Agency at Middleton is good . It is possible for residents to see them, and he had got things done . He added that the journey along Dewsbury Road which formerly took 10 minutes now takes half an hour. John Hook noted that the Elland Road Park and Ride facility has one electric bus . Steve Francis noted that the nearer a person is to Dewsbury Road, the easier it is to get in and out . He noted that the top end of Beeston is served by services 1, 65 and 75, of which the 65 service does not operate on Sundays. He added that the 65 service is needed for wheelchair bound passengers because Thirlmere Gardens is bad to get up for people in a wheelchair. Ken Hewson noted that Leeds City Council has a pot of money to build cycle tracks , but there is no consideration for other road users . Bill Birch said that roads should either have cycle tracks or should not have them ; not half and half . Pauline Johnson noted that the current situation is quite dangerous. Adam Cooper said that there is no encouragement for people to use bikes . He noted that the roads are at a standstill because of the installation of infrastructure which is not used . He noted that the removal of bus lanes to install cycle tracks had been counter-productive and added that we cannot have a road like Dewsbury Road where traffic is stopping and blocking roads every few hundred yards . He added that he is fed up of driving up York Road and seeing bicycles on the road rather than on cycle tracks. In Kirkstall Road, there is a bus stop in the middle of a cycle track. H said that cycle tracks are designed by idiots and that he has no faith in using them . They are dangerous. No one uses the cycle tracks on Armley Road as cars pull across them . There is no communication as to how to use them . Things are done with no proper consultation.

7.8 Abbie Miladinovic said that the committee will take this away and translate this into objectives and forward thinking in relation to the first section of the Neighbourhood plan We need to identify the evidence needed.

8. Other issues relating to the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum – Robert Winfield said that he was delighted to have been informed by Abbie Miladinovic earlier in the meeting that the Neighbourhood Forum's application to extend the Beeston Neighbourhood area by adding the area in and around Stank Hall Barn had been approved. Robert Winfield noted that there had been a steady influx of new members to the Neighbourhood Forum's facebook group, membership of which currently stood at 145. Robert Winfield stressed that membership of the Facebook group is not membership of the Neighbourhood Forum but pointed out that he had recently made a post in the group explaining that group members who meet the criteria for membership of the Neighbourhood Forum (that is, they live, work or carry on business in the Neighbourhood Area) and who are not already members of the Neighbourhood Forum could apply for membership of the Neighbourhood Forum by e mailing him. However, Robert Winfield had not so far received any membership applications from this source. Christine Thornton noted that members of the Neighbourhood Forum are welcome to attend its meetings , and added that it is a bugbear to her that whilst the Neighbourhood Forum has around 80 or so members, meetings are being attended by the same group of members , that we had , on one occasion, virtually to drag people off the street to ensure that one meeting was quorate . She added that it is okay messing around on facebook , but she likes to speak to people She suggested that we should let members stand up and be counted if they care about Beeston

9. A discussion took place about the venue for Forum meetings. Ash Mahmood said that the venue is wrong. He

had discussed this with colleagues and explained that Muslims feel uncomfortable attending meetings at the venue because of its connection with a pub. Christine Thornton said that she is glad that Ash Mahmood attends meetings and pointed out that meetings will take place in the new Beeston Village Community Centre as soon as this is built. In the meantime, we had secured the present venue at no cost and she felt that we should stick with the venue. Jeremy Morton said that he does not like attending meetings at the venue which he felt is not conducive to holding meetings. He noted that he had heard around four or five conversations at the meeting and had not therefore heard the deliberations which had taken place. Jeremy Morton suggested that the Forum should apply for a small grant of £500 from the Leeds City Council Community Committee so that the Forum could book St Mary's church for meetings taking place until the new community centre becomes available. Bill Birch said that this would be a waste of money and noted that it is effectively his money which would be wasted as he pays council tax. Ash Mahmood however noted that there are other council taxpayers in Beeston. Christine Thornton noted that the Beeston Community Forum had been in existence for 17 years, and the forum has in the past applied for grants from Leeds City Council for day to day running expenses of the Forum including for room hire. She noted that there had been discussions in the committee about the best venue for meetings, which had reached the conclusion that the current venue would be the best whilst Beeston Village Community Centre is unavailable, on the basis that it is available at no cost and in the vicinity of Beeston Village Community Centre. Rosemary Casserley said that wherever we go for meetings, it will affect some people. Robert Winfield felt that the Forum should take a decision as to whether we should use the present venue or St Mary's Church and that he would be happy with whatever is decided. Christine Thornton acknowledged that she is not a fan of pubs, but noted that the venue for meetings had been discussed several times.

10. Meetings during 2018- Robert Winfield said that he would put a proposal which had been agreed by the Committee in relation to meetings during 2018. He proposed that all the meetings between January and November shall be joint meetings of the Beeston Community Forum and the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum. It is not intended that there will be substantial discussions about the Neighbourhood Forum at all such meetings, but that this is to ensure that Neighbourhood Forum business can be transacted at all meetings, rather than potentially having to wait for three months, as at present. It is envisaged that there would be substantial discussions about the Neighbourhood Plan at the February, May, August and November meetings, as in 2017, although these dates would be subject to change, if it is considered expedient to change these arrangements. The December meeting would be the AGM of the Beeston Community Forum, which would not be a joint meeting with the Neighbourhood Forum. Robert Winfield added that although the meetings would formally be joint meetings of the Beeston Community Forum and the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum, they would be known, for short as Beeston Forum meetings. The proposal was agreed.

11. The meeting agreed to ratify the decision of the Committee to co-opt Pam Jones as a member of the Neighbourhood Forum Committee

12. Report of Committee Meeting held on Thursday 19th October – Christine Thornton noted that most of the meeting had been occupied with discussions about the Neighbourhood Planning Workshop which had just taken place

13. Correspondence-Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Will Pearson of First Leeds, who apologised for the failings of First Leeds around the failure of Chris Powell to attend the July Forum meeting. Mr Pearson added that as we are aware of the circumstances surrounding Chris Powell's departure from First Leeds, he will not dwell on the issue. He added that the event led to a period where his accounts were locked including e mail, calendars, and diary invites, so that the person who would have picked up the outstanding meetings was not aware of the planned meeting (Will Pearson added that the timing could not have been worse as he was also on holiday). Will Pearson added that first Leeds has appointed a replacement Operations Manager, Richard Tandy, whom he had copied into his e mail. He added that we should feel free to contact him direct to make the necessary arrangements for meetings in 2018. He added that First Leeds is looking forward to re establishing the relationship between First and the Beeston Community Forum. Robert Winfield outlined the circumstances surrounding Chris Powell's departure from First Leeds. He had arranged to meet a person whom he believed was

a 14 year old boy in Holbeck for the purposes of having sex. This was actually a sting operation. He was arrested , dismissed from the employment of First Leeds , brought before the courts and jailed after pleading guilty to the relevant offences.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 Rev Lindsey Pearson said that the repairs to the St Mary's Church clock have almost been completed . She hoped that the clock hand would be on soon; hopefully by the time of the Christmas Fair on 25th November . If the clock is ready, this would be celebrated then.

14.2 Rev Lindsey Pearson said that the switch on the Beeston Christmas lights would take place at 6pm on Thursday 30th November outside Beston Co-op. A suggestion from Robert Winfield that we use the event to publicise the Neighbourhood Forum found no support

14.3 Shaz Akhtar said that Aspiring Communities would be holding a fun and health awareness day between 12pm and 4p.m on Saturday 9th December . There would be doctors, chiropractors and free BMI checks . Money would be raised for Macmillan Cancer and the local food bank. There would be activities, food and bouncy castles . All communities are welcome.

14.4 Pauline Johnson asked whether anyone knew about the incident which had taken place in Beeston the previous day, which had involved armed police and the cordoning off of streets. It was noted that the police were again absent from the meeting, which agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that we write to the police seeking an explanation for their absence (*Secretary's note – On the day after the meeting , I received an e mail from Deborah Thornes, the Neighbourhood Policing Co-Ordinator apologising for the non attendance of the police due to operational matters*). John Cunningham noted that this matter had started on the previous Sunday when a fire engine had been seen at 6 am close to the junction between Wooler Road and Cross Flatts Crescent even though there was no fire. On the following day , there were police all over at the second house down on Cross Flatts Crescent . A shooting had taken place and the house was raided ; police had been going backwards and forwards since . There were 15 police there on the day before the meeting. Adam Cooper noted that he had seen a report saying that these matters are part of a feud and he wondered whether the family feud which had been taking place in Beeston had resumed

14.5 Ash Mahmood said that Aspiring Communities would be holding a meeting at 7p.m to 9p.m on Monday 10th December at St Mary's Church outlining the plans for the Ice Pak site and in particular the removal of asbestos

14.6 Robert Winfield noted that he had not produced posters advertising the most recent meetings of the Forum but acknowledged that local residents cannot be expected to attend meetings if they are not aware that the meetings are taking place . He intended to resume the practice of producing posters which he will e mail to members of the Committee so they can make whatever uses of the posters they can. Robert Winfield added that he would be happy to supply posters to other members of the forum , but would require an e mail address

14.7 Robert Winfield noted that he had recently seen a press report that First Leeds are carrying out a consultation process about the types of vehicles they would use in the future. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that he write to First Leeds to ask how Forum members can be involved in this consultation

14.8 Sandra Burton noted that she has three copies of the Beeston Local History Society's book ' Notes from an Old Beeston' available for sale. Robert Winfield said that he would buy a copy

14.9 Christine Thornton reminded members that the next meeting of the Forum is the Forum AGM on 7th December .