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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 4th February 2016

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker- Stewart Robinson , International Fun Fairs
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum meeting held on 7th January 2016
5. Police Report
6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan
7. Report of the Committee meeting held on 8th January 2016
8. Correspondence
9. Co-options to the Committee
10. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 7th January 2016

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair) , Mr. R. Bell, Mrs. M. Broadbent, Mr. R. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, M. A. Cooper, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, Mr. C. Hendrick Ward , Mr. K. Hewson , Mr J. Hook , Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. E. Leatham, D. McGough, A. McGrath, Mrs. D. McGuigan, Mrs. M. Munro, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, PC Pashley (West Yorkshire Police), Rev. L. Pearson, PC Tebbutt (West Yorkshire Police) and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks . Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and wished the members present a Happy New Year. She hoped that the New Year would bring what everyone hopes
2. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Birch, Jean Birch, Mary Dinsdale and Jeremy Morton
3. Guest Speaker-
 - 3.1 Christine Thornton introduced the Guest Speaker, Chris Powell of First Leeds. Chris Powell explained that he is the Operations Manager at First Leeds's Hunslet Park depot, which operates the majority of bus services in this part of Leeds. He has been in his present post for 12 months, having started on his 49th birthday. He

acknowledged that his job has its challenges, in particular in maintaining the punctuality and reliability of the bus services. Chris Powell stated that over the past 8 months, First have 'recruited, recruited and recruited' so that for the first time in two years, First have enough drivers to operate the service, and indeed has 10 more drivers than this. He has seen the operation gradually improve. Chris Powell said that although this might not be believed, the no 1 bus service is actually the most punctual bus service at his depot. There is 96-97% punctuality at the origin of the route, but Chris acknowledged that this is not reflected at the intermediate timing points.

Chris Powell referred to a trial which is currently taking place on the 42 service which would be looked after by a small group of drivers and controllers. Customers want buses every 10 minutes if the timetable states that they are due every ten minutes. The trial started on 4th January having been planned and tested at the beginning of December (Chris Powell explained that there is no point in carrying out such a test later as it is the run up to Christmas). The trial will run for 12 weeks, then it will be evaluated. The methods used on the 42 service might be used on the Dewsbury Road service (44 vehicles on this corridor) in order to improve the service. Chris Powell said that he is slowly chipping away at shortcomings. He noted that this is the largest garage he has ever managed, having been a manager since 1995. Hunslet Park has 208 buses and 515 drivers

Chris Powell noted that he had received an e mail from Robert Winfield about a number of topics which are of interest to Forum members. He dealt with these issues in turn. With regard to the New Routemaster, he noted that decisions about this would be taken at board level, and that Government ministers would be involved in decisions about how to take any use of the New Routemaster forward. However, Chris Powell doubted whether the New Routemaster would be suitable for roads in this area due to its long wheelbase. He noted that London is flat. Richard Bell noted that the electric motors on the new Routemaster do not work.

With regard to the possible introduction of a ticketing system similar to the Oyster card in London, he noted that Metro (or the West Yorkshire Combined Authority) have issued a number of pre loaded smart cards to its employees in order to see whether the technology works. Metro prefer not to sell the cards to the public in circumstances where the cards would go belly up. The cards in issue are trialled on the CityBus only to allow monitoring of the technology. In the long term if successful and such a product was introduced across West Yorkshire it would reduce the amount of cash being carried on buses and this reduces the risk of drivers being assaulted if a robbery took place.

Chris Powell then dealt with the number of buses displaying 'Not in Service'. Chris Powell said that he sees this all the time. He noted that the control room which controls real time information and service regulation is located in Bradford. A driver will phone the control room; they adjust the service, amend the real time displays and instruct the driver to show not in service. This is to help maintain the reliability of the route. However, they do not always contact the local operating depot to pass on the information. He added that if the trial on the 42 service works and is implemented elsewhere, we will see less of this. As a result of the situation with drivers, he can now run buses rather than engage in recruiting. He noted that although a bus driver can leave on 1 week's notice, it takes 12 – 16 weeks to train a bus driver; a process which involves an interview, a medical and the issue of a licence. He noted that operating the bus service was horrendous last year. He noted that when there are not sufficient drivers to operate the service, controllers must decide whether to pull a particular service. He added that controllers are challenged to keep for lost mileage to a minimum, however in the event of losing mileage the Dewsbury Road corridor is the service that normally loses a vehicle. A frequent service would be cut before a less frequent service.

Chris Powell added that all the bendybuses have gone. He noted that they do three miles to the gallon and stink. They are parked at Cherry Row and are awaiting scrapping. First may be in line to receive a batch of brand new buses in the Spring; we need as many new buses as possible to meet the Euro 6 emissions rules which will be introduced in 2020. There is daily engagement with drivers, who are expected to ask people with concessionary passes to scan them. Some drivers say that the machine does not work. If a machine is broken this is true, but First are implementing an audit of this. First are not paid for concessions unless the card is swiped. Chris Powell explained that First are also paying attention to customer service. He is well aware that some of First's staff are not the most pleasant. However, when new staff join at the depot, they have what is known as a 'Powell Chat' in which they are told what they are doing. Chris confirmed that he had been a bus driver a few years ago and said he would not drive through Leeds City Centre if he were paid in gold bullion. He points out that buses

would not run if there are no passengers. If new employees do not meet any of the required standards over a six month probationary period they may have their employment terminated. 80 new drivers have joined since April . Chris Powell added that his job takes a lot of doing but he enjoys it

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst issues discussed were the punctuality and the reliability of the No 9 Service , the problems which had arisen as a result of the Vicar Lane bus diversion , whether passengers can board buses which are standing at termini, the effect on bus fares of the recent fall in the oil price, the cancellation of bus journeys , the practice of some drivers of displaying 'Not in Service' on destination blinds, the practice of some passengers of placing their feet on bus seats, the practice of buses standing at termini, and the parking of buses on Joseph Street

3.3 It was noted that Chris Powell's e mail address is Christopher.powell@firstgroup.com

4. Minutes of the Forum meeting held on 12th November 2015. Councillor Angela Gabriel referred to paragraph 10.1 of the minutes and pointed out that the AGM of the Beeston Festival actually took place at the Brew Café on Beeston Road, rather than the Watsonian Pavilion, as stated in the minutes (*Secretary's Note , this should have been paragraph 11.1 , but there was a numbering error in the minutes circulated at the meeting. This error will be corrected for the copy of the minutes posted on the Forum website*). Subject to this matter, the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Richard Bell asked what had happened to the site owned by Tesco Stores Limited, on which they had intended to build a store for which planning permission had been refused . Robert Winfield noted that he had received a reply to his e mail to Tesco 8ndicating that the land had been sold through Savills to a company named Glugston Developments. He had e mailed Savills seeking information about the future use of the land. Savills have forwarded the mail to Glugston Developments and a reply from them is awaited.

5.2 Questions were asked as to whether the Aspiring Communities Planning Application had been considered by the last Plans Panel meeting, as envisaged. Christine Thornton noted that the application has not been considered. Councillor David Congreve said that a report has not yet gone to the plans panel . The Planning Application would, he noted now be considered by the Planning Inspectorate , A report outlining the council's position has not yet gone to the plans panel . This might be due to the workload of the plans panel but the report is not urgent. Once we have date we will get somewhere . David Congreve noted that the matter is not on the agenda for the Plans Panel meeting taking place on 14th January. Adam Cooper noted that this process is notoriously slow and can take months.

6. It was noted that the minutes of the Forum AGM which had taken place on 4th December 2014 had not been considered at the following AGM which had taken place on 3rd December 2015. Robert Winfield pointed out that although the minutes of the AGM had been sent to Health for All (Leeds) for photocopying this task had been overlooked so that the minutes were not available. The AGM therefore passed a resolution that the minutes be presented to the present meeting for approval. The minutes were approved.

7. Police Report

7.1 PC Pashley referred to the crime figures between 1st December and the present, a period of slightly longer than a month. He noted that the number of burglary dwellings had fallen from 14 to 8. This is remarkable as the number of burglaries is expected to rise over Christmas. There are three burglary others (that is, thefts from garages, sheds and other buildings not attached to houses). There were nineteen thefts from motor vehicles, described as an alarming number, but it was noted that many involve the removal of number plates from vehicles, It was noted that the number plates, thus stolen , are placed on the thieves' own vehicles. The thieves then make off with petrol without paying for it. It was noted that many people are leaving cars unlocked, and that there are people trying car door handles. There have been a number of arrests of people on bail . It was noted that prosecutions are determined by the Crown Prosecution Service. Colin Hendrick Ward wondered whether people who are on bail are still committing crime. It was noted that individuals who are on bail can be subject to a night curfew. Adam Cooper noted that a neighbour had had a car stolen by someone who was on bail; the criminal was sentenced for other offences the day after the offence. PC Pashley noted that crime is a

way of life for some people . He noted that two people are on bail for three car thefts. He noted that he had described what is known as SAQ Crime (Serious and Acquisitive Crime) . With regard to matters which had been dealt with at the last Forum meeting at which the police had spoken, he wondered whether any member of the audience had any further concerns about Gee Gee cars. PC Pashley added that the problems caused by a number of Polish people in Cross Flatts Park. The police are working with a number of Polish speaking people. Colin Hendrick Ward said that he had seen someone at the far end of the park. PC Pashley wondered whether the situation is better than it had been. It was felt that it was. Christine Thornton noted that the issue had moved from the benches facing Dewsbury Road, but she had seen ten men and a couple of woman. Colin Hendrick Ward asked why the people involved engage in such conduct. PC Pashley said that if the police knew the answer to that question that would solve it . He noted that the police are paying attention to someone who has recently been released from jail for burglary

7.2 The meeting opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Adam Cooper said that he had heard rumours from friends in the area that the instigators of the family feud had been separated and confined to different parts of the country , and that there had also been rumours of an attempt to make a bomb. PC Pashley confirmed that the suspects are on bail in different parts of the country with a condition not to come to this part of the country. Richard Bell referred to rumours of a gun being passed around. Adam Cooper referred to rumours about attempts to make a bomb with imported fireworks. The police officers present said that these are simply rumours . PC Tebbutt noted that the bail conditions on the suspects are closely monitored. Colin Hendrick Ward said that the community knew who the suspects are buy there was some reluctance to tackle them . PC Tebbutt said that the suspects had been arrested for various linked incidents but potential witnesses had felt intimidated and the case had fallen down in court. The police then embarked on a different route involving injunctions. Adam Cooper asked what would happen to the proceeds of crime if the court case goes ahead. He noted that various things in this area are linked to this family, and that there is more than firebombing cars and shootings. He wondered whether we could claim properties owned by families. PC Pashley noted that the police has a specialist proceeds of crime team which he hopes is looking at this matter, but he cannot say for definite. Richard Bell noted that people had been parking untaxed cars in his street. He had reported this to the police but no one cared.

7.3 A member of the audience referred to an incident which had taken place at 3am on Christmas morning involving someone smashing wing mirrors on cars on Old Lane. She and her husband went out and saw this happening. She added that one young lady has had her wing mirror smashed five times , leading to her incurring costs of £200. A police car had tried to stop the culprit but he looked at local residents but carried on. She noted that one lady has reported this, but she asked whether the police had seen her. Richard Bell noted that most people accept that the police cannot do everything , but if people report crime and get an indifferent response, people will say ‘Why bother?’ PC Pashley said that one bad apple results in all the police being tarred with the same brush. PC Tebbutt noted that a member of the public called in about a burglary on the Parkwoods on 2nd January. The police then caught two burglars within five minutes. Richard Bell said that the police should publicise their successes as their failures certainly will be publicised.

7.4 Adam Cooper noted that cars have been using Cross Flats Grove, Cross Flatts Avenue and Barkly Road as rat runs . Cars travel at 40 to 60mph. He had raised this issue on a number of occasions , and suggested that the police position a car on a street corner and make an example of a speeding motorist. PC Pashley said that the police would try to deal with this matter. Adam Cooper suggested undertaking speed checks at the graveyard at Noster Hill. Adam Cooper noted that he recently attended a meeting at Christine Thornton’s house . Hew noted that cars travel at speed where there is a kink in the road and that this has led to a number of accidents, and that such accidents are still happening. PC Pashley said that he would feed this information back to the traffic department . Adam Cooper said that when the police catch someone speeding in this manner, they should throw the book at them. People will then think that if they get caught, they will get screwed. PC Tebbutt noted that anti social drivers receive a section 59 notice under which a vehicle can be confiscated if they are caught again. PC Pashley observed that CCTV is marvellous. A member of the audience noted that cars are turning from Dewsbury Road ,close to Kwik Fit into the road leading to the John Charles Stadium ,and making U turns. She feared that there would be an accident. PC Pashley asked whether there is a ‘No U turn’ sign at this location. It was noted that there is no such sign.

8. Beston Neighbourhood Forum. Robert Winfield noted that the last time he had reported about the Neighbourhood Forum, the Neighbourhood Forum was still coming to terms with Greg Turton's shock resignation as Chairman. Robert Winfield noted that there had been a number of developments since. There have been two planning workshops with the Neighbourhood Forum's planning advisor Shaun Hanson. A committee meeting had taken place with Ian Mackay, the Neighbourhood Planning officer for Leeds City Council. Robert Winfield noted that Ian Mackay is an acknowledged expert about Neighbourhood Planning and has been a guest speaker at the Beeston Community Forum. Robert Winfield noted that it had hitherto been the intention that most of the work of the Neighbourhood Forum would be carried out through seven task groups. However, Shaun Hanson had advised against the task groups on the basis that there is a risk that the Neighbourhood Forum would become fragmented. Robert Winfield noted that the last meeting of the Neighbourhood Forum, on 1st December had been inquorate, so that regardless of Shaun Hanson's advice, it is clear that some of the task groups at least would not be viable unless and until there is an increase in the active membership of the Neighbourhood Forum. In addition, it was realised that the Neighbourhood Forum meeting in September had been inquorate. The Neighbourhood Forum will need to take a decision about the future of the task groups but there is a clear consensus that there are too many. Robert Winfield noted that in view of the poor attendance of recent meetings, consideration is being given to reducing the quorum for meetings, but it was emphasised that the resolution to change the quorum must be passed by a meeting attended by the existing quorum of members.

Christine Thornton noted that almost everyone who attends meetings of the Beeston Community Forum had applied for membership of the Neighbourhood Forum but many such individuals tend not to attend Neighbourhood Forum meetings. She noted that the Neighbourhood Forum meeting on 1st December had been attended by 10 people, compared with the Neighbourhood Forum's membership of 89. Mark Parry, the Secretary of the Neighbourhood Forum noted that a meeting of the Neighbourhood Forum is due to take place on 25th February.

9. Resolution relating to future Forum meetings. Robert Winfield proposed the resolution printed on the agenda paper, as follows:-

That the Forum meetings held in February, May, August and November shall be reserved for a longer discussion of Neighbourhood Planning than has hitherto taken place at Forum meetings. These meetings shall host no guest speakers, except for brief presentations which cannot practically take place at any other Forum meeting.

Robert Winfield proposed an amendment to the motion under which, after the first of the meetings at which a longer discussion of neighbourhood planning is envisaged, the idea of such discussion would be abandoned if it is considered not to be successful. However, Adam Cooper felt that two or three meetings would be required to determine the success or otherwise of this idea and the amendment was not pursued. Robert Winfield stressed that the meetings at which a longer discussion of Neighbourhood Planning takes place would remain meetings of the Beeston Community Forum, not meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum. Rosemary Casserley asked about guest speakers at Forum meetings. Robert Winfield pointed out that Stewart Robinson of International Fun fairs had been invited to attend the February meeting (Robert Winfield noted that this is invariably a short presentation). Hilary Benn had been invited to the September meeting whilst Insp Arrowsuch of West Yorkshire Police and Councillor Judith Blake, the Leader of Leeds City Council had been invited to any of the remaining meetings not earmarked for a longer discussion about Neighbourhood Planning. Richard Bell said that holding a longer discussion about Neighbourhood Planning is a great idea. The resolution was passed unanimously.

10. Report of Committee meetings. Christine Thornton noted that the Committee meeting held on 24th November had dealt with preparations for the AGM, the drafting of the Annual Report and consideration of the Aspiring Communities planning application. The Committee meeting on 17th December had considered letters to and from the Planning Department in relation to the Aspiring Communities planning application. There was also a discussion about a possible invitation as a guest speaker to Nigel Richardson, the Director of Children's Services for Leeds City Council. There had also been a discussion about possible alternative venues for meetings of the Beeston Community Forum whilst Beeston Village Community Centre is unavailable due to its

redevelopment.. It was also noted that John and Kathleen Fentpn , both of whom had served on the Committee of the Forum, would shortly be moving to Chester to be closer to their daughter. It was noted that John Fenton had declined to seek re election to the Committee at the recent AGM, whilst ill health had constrained Kathleen Fenton from attending meetings of the Forum in recent years. Christine Thornton also noted that Doris Brooke is likely to become a less frequent attender of Forum meetings in the future as she is dependent on a lift from John Fenton which will obviously no longer be available. It was noted that John and Kathleen Fenton will be likely to be moving away from Leeds in February. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that we write to John and Kathleen Fenton thanking them for their services to the Forum over many years

11. Correspondence

11.1 Robert Winfield noted that Councillor Angela Gabriel had forwarded an e mail to him about a planning application in relation to a detached storage building to a factory at Manor Mill Lane

11.2 Robert Winfield updated the Forum in relation to the latest position in connection with correspondence with possible alternative venues for Forum meetings. He noted that he had yet to receive a response from Hugh Gaitskell School and St Anthony's Church, whilst St Mary's Church had advised that their hall might not be available until 7.15p.m. Robert Winfield felt that this might cause problems , but this could be discussed with the church if there is a serious possibility of using the hall for Forum meetings. Robert Winfield noted that any venue would need to be close to the present venue; he recalled that attendance at Forum meetings had suffered when Forum meetings were held at St Andrew's Church. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Richard Bell that we approach Elland Road police station about the use of their meeting room.

11.3 Robert Winfield explained the position in relation to an invitation to the Forum to Nigel Richardson, the Director of Childrens Services for Leeds City Council. He recalled that he had been invited to attend the August 2015 Forum meeting. , but shortly beforehand, Robert Winfield had received an e mail from his office that they had no record of him having been invited . Robert Winfield then checked his e mails and located the e mail inviting him. Robert Winfield then received a telephone message from his office apologising for his inability to attend the present Forum meeting (to which he had not been invited) for personal family meetings. It was nevertheless agreed to invite Nigel Richardson to attend a Forum meeting during 2016

12. The meeting agreed to ratify the decision of the committee to appoint Colin Hendrick Ward as Treasurer of the Forum. Councillor David Congreve asked for his contact details so that he can be added to the list of recipients of councillors' MICE money

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Pauline Johnson said that we appeared to have lost the bottle bank near to Beeston Co-op and asked the Councillors for a comment about this. Councillor Angela Gabriel pointed out that the bottle bank has been reinstated

13.2 Rosemary Casserley noted that over Christmas, local residents had put out their litter bins for collection on the days set out on the sticker provided by Leeds City Council . However, the dates had been further changed resulting in a large number of bins remaining out on Christmas Day . She wondered whether more publicity could have been given to these further changes. Christine Thornton noted that if bins are not emptied on he appointed day, residents are expected to take the bin back onto their property. She would not want her bin to remain outside on Christmas Day. Stuart Casserley noted that not all residents are as conscientious as that. Christine Thornton felt that the bin men had done well over the New Year. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that changes are not publicised as much as they might be due to cost cutting, and noted that the relevant information had been publicised on the Save Our Beeston facebook page. Christine Thornton felt that the discussion should be put into perspective as it only relates to two days per year. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that she had been unaware of this change of mind and she had received no correspondence at all. Richard Bell noted that it is possible to check bin collection dates by inputting a postcode into the Leeds City Council website.

13.3 Christine Thornton reminded the meeting that there are a number of vacant positions on the committee