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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Community Forum , General Meeting 4th October 2012

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker- Insp. Paul Akerman, West Yorkshire Police
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 6th September 2012
5. Correspondence
6. Report of Committee meeting - 20th September 2012
7. Tesco and Asda Planning Applications
8. Any Other Business (including, if time permits, Beeston Village Community Centre)

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 6th September 2012.

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Almond, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mr. D. Bottomley, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. R. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, J. Collier, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, Mr. J. Hodgson, Mr. J. Hook, Miss. P. Johnson, Mrs. D. Kenny, Mr. A. Kirby, Mrs. C. Kirk, Mr. Y. Mahmood, PCSO Metcalfe (West Yorkshire Police), Miss. E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. R. Pavarotti Hunt, Mr. A. Pointon, Mr. B. Stevens, Mrs. C. Stevens, Mr. F. Swift, Sgt. D. Whiteside (West Yorkshire Police) and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton thanked those present for their attendance and pointed out that Hilary Benn, our guest speaker, was on his way to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Doris Brooke, John Fenton, Kathleen Fenton, Steve Johnson, Sally Kincaid, Mark Parry, John Peckham and Greg Turton
3. The minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 2nd August were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.
4. Matter Arising- Mr Casserley asked whether there had been any developments in relation to the cleaning of the gardens on Middleton Ring Road. Christine Thornton said that no one had been back to her about this matter. Robert Winfield added that he has no knowledge of any developments. It was noted that the gardens are full of rubbish. Councillor Angela Gabriel undertook to check about this matter.
5. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Forum held on 28th June 2012. Christine Thornton recalled that the last meeting of the Forum had agreed to her proposal that consideration of the minutes be deferred, on the basis that the document is so lengthy that members could not reasonably read the document and form a judgement as to whether the minutes are a fair and accurate record of the meeting. Robert Winfield pointed out that he had started to eliminate a number of typographical errors from the document circulated at the last meeting and would be posting the revised version of the document on the Forum website as soon as this process had been completed. He stressed that there is no intention of altering the meaning of the document. The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

6. The Police

6.1 Sgt. Diane Whiteside noted that Sgt. John Arrowsuch and herself are permanent Sergeants in the Holbeck Neighbourhood Policing Team, and there is also Acting Sergeant Sam Greaves. Sgt. Whiteside noted that PC Pat McDonald will be an acting sergeant during her absence on her forthcoming holidays. Sgt. Whiteside noted that during the last four weeks, there had been 35 crimes in this area. There had been an increase in the number of thefts from motor vehicles; in the Cross Flatts Area, a number of secure motor vehicles had been broken into. There is forensic evidence linking these crimes to the person who is believed to be responsible. There should be a dip in the figures to the usual levels. Sgt. Whiteside added that there had been three burglary dwellings in the past month; this is in line with previous months. One of these burglaries had been a sneak in burglary, in which the back door had been left open. Sgt. Whiteside called upon local residents to ensure vigilance. Sgt. Whiteside noted that the police are monitoring the number of commercial burglaries, involving factories and similar premises. Sgt. Whiteside then dealt with the local priorities. In connection with Anti Social Behaviour on the Cardinal Estate Sgt. Whiteside noted that there had been no feedback from the PCSOs who are there on a daily basis. Councillor Angela Gabriel pointed out that the Cardinals has its own residents' group. With regard to Anti Social Behaviour on Cross Flatts Park, Sgt. Whiteside noted that a lot had been going on, particularly during the school holidays. There had been nuisance bikes and youths hanging around. With regard to Gipsy Lane, Arthur Kirby pointed out that cars were still going up the road at speed, although the situation had improved. There are also street bikers around. Sgt. Whiteside pointed out that a speed indication device used on Gipsy Lane had failed to highlight any speeding vehicles.

6.2 Christine Thornton noted that at the last meeting of the Forum, Angela Gabriel had referred to Anti Social Behaviour close to a butchers shop. Angela Gabriel pointed out that the relevant street is Back Cross Flatts Terrace. Christine Thornton wondered whether the term 'Cross Flatts Area' refers to the block of terrace houses adjacent to Beeston Road. She noted that Cross Flatts Avenue and much of Cross Flatts Grove are further afield from this area. Pauline Johnson noted that she lives on Cross Flatts Grove and cars travel so fast along the road that they had gone by the time she is able to reach her window to look at the vehicle. She noted that there is no particular time at which vehicles pass along Cross Flatts Grove at speed, but she would make a note of the relevant times in future. Sgt. Whiteside said that she would report back on this issue at the next meeting. She felt that high visibility policing might result in people thinking about their speed. A speed device is a possibility.

6.3 John Cunningham asked whether the dispersal order is still in force. Sgt Whiteside said that it is no longer in force, and that the police must have intelligence that a dispersal order is required in order to apply for it. Such intelligence might come from meetings similar to the one which was currently taking place. She added that sometimes behaviour is no worse than children being children, but could also have an impact on peoples' lives.

6.4 Steve Francis supported the comments of Pauline Johnson in relation to Cross Flatts Grove. He added that it is the only road in the area with no traffic calming measures. Christine Thornton pointed out that the road has chicanes. Sgt. Whiteside said that it is clear that there is a problem with speeding in the area. The police would have a look at the situation and possibly use a speed indication device. She noted that evidence would be required to persuade the council to spend money on the area. Steve Francis said that this matter had been discussed at Forum meetings for five years. Christine Thornton said that junctions had been altered and that there are also bulging out pavements. Steve Francis said that the street just needs a 20 mph speed limit, not speed bumps. He noted that there is a speed limit, and speed bumps on Tempest Road. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that she lives on Cross Flatts Grove, close to the junction with Robb Street. She noted that cars do not stop at the junction and children are playing football close by. She feared that someone would be killed. Sgt. Whiteside wondered whether this is happening at any times of the day. Angela Gabriel said that this is happening during early evenings (6p.m to 10p.m), and that speeding traffic is not stopping at the 'give way' junction. Sgt. Whiteside said that she would look into the matter and report back at the next meeting.

6.5 John Hodgson felt that the difficulties at Cross Flatts Grove are caused by the calming measures on Tempest Road. He noted that there are no calming measures on Wesley Street despite the fact that there had been deaths on the street. There had only been white lines painted on the middle of the road, which had showed that it is not a straight road. He felt that in order to address the issue of traffic problems we need to look at the LS11 postal district as a whole. He added that if people obey the law, there would be traffic jams twice a day on Wesley Street. In fact, traffic goes onto the Sunnyview estate in breach of restrictions. If this did not happen, there would be tailbacks from Elland Road to the Armley gyratory. Christine Thornton felt that these problems are caused by incompetent drivers.

6.6 Dennis Bottomley noted that Cross Flatts Avenue continues onto Dalton Avenue and that cars go berserk on that section of road. A member of the audience noted that there had been three or four accidents along Old Lane and that one of these had occurred at 9.30 a.m. The issue had been raised with a councillor. It was noted that although there are speed cameras at Middleton, there are no cameras along Old Lane. Sgt. Whiteside said that she would link the issue in with Highways and the Forum. It was noted that there are no 30mph signs along Old Lane. Bill Birch felt that the problem has been caused by 'a small minority of crazies', and 'nutters doing 60 mph in a 30 mph limit', and that steps need to be taken to catch them. He said that nothing else would work and called for the use of proper speed cameras. Bill Birch wondered whether it would be

possible to use mobile speed cameras, possibly operated by covert police officers. Sgt. Whiteside said that officers have been trained to use mobile speed cameras but the officers must be visible when using them. She would look into the issues raised by Bill Birch.

6.7 Mick Mason noted that when Leeds United FC play at home cars park in front of the entrance to Sunnyview House and the adjacent traffic island. As a result of this situation buses are forced to travel on the wrong side of the road to pass other traffic. Sgt. Whiteside said that it is possible for the police to deal with car parking if it causes an obstruction. Mick Mason wondered whether the police have stopped patrols during football matches. Sgt. Whiteside said that this has not happened and the neighbourhood policing team are out during matches. Officers from neighbouring divisions help to patrol football matches.

7. Guest Speaker- Rt. Hon Hilary Benn, MP . Christine Thornton welcomed Hilary Benn.

7.1 Hilary Benn thanked the Forum for its invitation and apologised for his late arrival at the meeting, pointing out that he had travelled directly from Parliament. He thanked the Forum for its work in representing local residents . He also thanked the police, and the Councillors, noting that the Councillors had shown fantastic commitment, effort and hard graft. He took the opportunity to update the Forum in connection with a number of issues. With regard to the proposed Park and Ride Scheme, he noted that the Council is proposing a Park and Ride scheme at Stourton. If a park and ride scheme is located there, does there need to be another Park and Ride location. With regard to the Asda and Tesco planning applications, he noted that the planners now have reservations about the applications on planning grounds. With regard to the proposed Third Generation Sports Stadium at Cockburn , Hilary Benn noted that he had received a number of letters about the issue as have the Leeds City Councillors. He wants the school to have good facilities , but we need the correct location on the site to avoid disturbing local residents. He also took the opportunity to congratulate the school on its examination results. Hilary Benn then addressed the proposed cuts to the Fire service. He noted that 100 firefighters would go and that there is a proposal to close Hunslet and Morley fire stations and replace them with a new fire station located in between the two sites. It is intended to reduce the present three pumps over the two present fire stations to two. Hilary Benn explained that he is concerned about response times, and had indeed raised such issues nationally. He noted that the reduction in funding for metropolitan fire authorities has been larger than the reduction for fire authorities in rural areas. He noted that these continue to be difficult times. He noted that he recently responded (in his capacity as Shadow Spokesman for the Department for Communities and Local Government) to the statement by Mr Eric Pickles about Housing and Planning. Hilary Benn noted that there had been a 10% fall in house starts and a 68% fall in affordable house starts. There is a need for new housing, as people cannot afford rents. There is a need to build new homes, but it is not possible to blame the planning system for this situation. Planning permission had been granted for the building of 400000 homes , but these are not being built because many potential occupants are unable to obtain deposits and mortgages. This is as a result of the state of the economy, which, Hilary Benn noted is currently in double dip recession. However, Hilary Benn noted that there had been a number of inspirational things in connection with the summer Olympics. The Olympic torch had passed through our community and Hilary Benn said that he had been bowled over by the number of people coming to see the torch, including a crowd of over 800 people at Leeds Town Hall at an unearthly hour. Hilary Benn said that there are two lessons to be learned from this. Firstly, people can do things if they put their minds to it. Secondly, athletes had worked phenomenally hard. This he said, is an antidote to the image of instant celebrity. **When the minutes of this meeting were submitted for approval, Mick Mason objected to the omission from the minutes of his question dealing with immigration, and Hilary Benn's response. The full record of the exchange follows:-**

Mick Mason noted that David Cameron is committed to reducing the amount of money paid in housing benefit and asked whether Leeds would receive any funding from the UK Border Agency to settle immigrants in Leeds. He also noted that the Education Department were looking for land in this area. Hilary Benn noted that the funding of Leeds City Council had been cut, but that despite these pressures , they had decided to protect the funding to PCSOs. Hilary Benn applauded this. He recognised the importance of bobbies on the beat, and noted that the experience of neighbourhood policing over 13 years is that this has led to a transformation and improvement. It is so different to when there was no neighbourhood policing. He noted that the Education Department is looking for land as there are more children. People living in our community are, he noted, born both here and elsewhere, and children have the right to go to school. Hilary Benn pointed out that he is the son of an immigrant as his mother had been born in the USA. Hilary Benn acknowledged that there is an argument for a Regional cap on Housing Benefit as housing costs vary greatly from place to place, even within cities. However, some of the changes being proposed could cause real hardship. He is currently looking at a constituency case involving someone who would lose housing benefit as they have a spare room. This would affect carers looking after people who are ill, and people whose relatives stay with them. Hilary Benn noted that ALMOs are advising residents how much benefit they would lose. Hilary Benn said that the government's proposed changes are wrong, and asked that if people are only entitled to a one bedroom property, where are the one bedroom properties? Hilary Benn also referred to the forthcoming changes in council tax benefit, the responsibility for which will shortly be passed from the government to local authorities. He noted that there is a need to protect pensioners. The budget for pensioners will be cut by 10%, but budget cuts elsewhere would amount to 16%. Hilary Benn noted that Council Tax benefit is for people on low incomes and that fairness is more important in tough

times. He said that it is inexplicable that in April 2013, people on low incomes will face a rise in council tax whilst millionaires will receive a tax reduction of £40000 per annum.

7.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst comments raised were the possible closure of Hunslet Fire Station, the issue of traffic in the LS11 postal district and the impact of the Elland Road Park and Ride proposal on this, the reduction in Housing Benefit payments and the possible funding of Leeds by the UK Border Agency, the importance of manufacturing industry, the building of and availability of houses,

8. Correspondence:-

8.1 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Nigel Roberts explaining that surveyors had been marking out the level of the Park and Ride site at Elland Road. He suspected that this would be followed by a planning application.

8.2 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Waheed Khan noting that he had recently reopened the Subway Store on Elland Road and given employment to local Beeston Residents. Mr Khan wanted us to add something to our website or newsletter regarding the reopening of the Subway Store. Robert Winfield suspected that the terms and conditions of our website would prevent us promoting commercial interests.

8.3 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from John Adamson who said that he had heard rumours about the Ice Pak building becoming a travellers site. He said 'Please tell me that this isn't true'

9. Forthcoming Guest Speakers- Robert Winfield said that he was delighted to inform the Forum that the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Ann Castle and her husband Graham (both of whom he had known for over 20 years), would be attending the AGM of the Forum in December. Shaun Harvey, the Chief Executive of Leeds United FC would attend the Forum meeting in January 2013.

10. Licensing applications- Christine Thornton noted that Ken Burton, Sandra Burton and Angela Gabriel had attended the meeting of the licensing committee which determined the application by Bal Newsagents to sell alcohol. It was decided that Bal can only open until 2 a.m on Saturday and Sunday. Two people must be present in the shop and customers must actually enter the shop in order to be served, rather than being served through a hatch. Angela Gabriel noted that the owner of Bal Newsagents had told her that he would not be able to afford to have two staff in his shop. She thanked Ken Burton and Sandra Burton for their attendance at the meeting.. Angela Gabriel stressed the need to be vigilant in opposing off licence applications, because if one application is successful, it becomes more difficult to oppose subsequent applications. David Congreve noted that there is a licensing application in relation to 292 Cross Flatts Grove. He urged members to make objections as soon as possible. It was resolved that the Forum object.

11. Asda and Tesco planning applications. Robert Winfield proposed that we write to the Leeds City Council Planning Department and the leaders of the major political parties on Leeds City Council expressing our concerns about the demonstrated incompetence of the Leeds City Council Planning Department, notably, in relation to their claim that there is a building on the site of Tesco's store, and the fact that they have continued to use Colliers International as a consultant in relation to the planning application despite the fact that they had not replied to our invitation to attend the Special Meeting on 28th June. This was agreed. Christine Thornton wondered when the planning application would be heard. David Congreve said that it is his understanding that both planning applications would be coming to the plans panel in October (a member of the audience called out, 'Which year?'). David Congreve said that council officers are waiting for clarification on a number of questions for Colliers who had been engaged by Leeds City Council for a cross city study. Bill Birch said that this situation could go on and on, and predicted that whoever loses the planning application could go to court and argue that Leeds City Council had acted in a vexatious manner. David Congreve predicted that as with many other applications, there will be legal repercussions whatever decision the panel comes to. Bill Birch said that the process has taken so long, there is almost bound to be litigation, with the costs to the council being borne by the Council taxpayers.

Robert Winfield then referred to a letter from Philip Bartram of Asda Stores Limited who was taking the opportunity to update us on Asda's plans. He acknowledged that members of the Forum will know the views of local residents better than most. He added that having been able to launch their proposal for a new store proposal a full year before Asda, Tesco may have initially seemed to be clearly favoured by local residents. Philip Bartram, however, took the opportunity to draw our attention to a recent petition which paints a strikingly different picture. He noted that a recent petition, gathered over some weeks in Asda's Old Lane store has now been delivered to the Leeds City Council Planning Department. 986 people supported the Asda proposal, 31 people supported the Tesco proposal and 48 people supported both proposals

Philip Bartram said that this equates to 97% support. Philip Bartram said that Asda believes that this very strong support is partly due to local people having had the time to compare and contrast the two competing schemes, and recognise the benefits of Asda's proposals. Philip Bartram added that a number of changes have been made to the design of the proposed store. It is now proposed that the building features sustainably sourced timber cladding, rather than a brick frontage. The design of the entrance has been modified to improve vision on the site and provide a more attractive street scene. The store will also feature a host of green technologies aimed at reducing environmental impact, including LED lighting throughout,

energy management systems to reduce CO2 emissions and comprehensive glazing to ensure lots of natural light and less need for artificial lighting. Robert Winfield added that Asda have asked the Forum to make clear that Asda and Tesco are now in the same position in relation to the Forum's stance on the planning applications. Robert Winfield indicated that he would be happy to advise the Planning Department accordingly.

Bill Birch said that the survey is rubbish and ridiculous, whilst Robert Winfield said that it was akin to taking a political opinion poll in the headquarters of one of the political parties.

12. Any Other Business-

12.1 Christine Thornton noted that she had applied on behalf of the Forum to Community First for a grant of £641 for the running costs of the Forum. The application was successful and the money is in our bank account.

12.2 It was noted that the kettle at Beeston Village Community Centre, which the forum had bought had been locked up, making it impossible to use it for the serving of tea after the meeting. It was agreed that Robert Winfield would raise this matter with Brian Pine, the facilities manager of Health for All (Leeds). **When the minutes were submitted for approval, Mick Mason pointed out that the reference to 'kettle' in the minutes should have been to a tea pot**

12.3 Robert Winfield noted that at a number of recent meetings, the attendance sheet had not been signed by a number of people attending the meeting. Robert Winfield was anxious to ensure that minutes of meetings are accurate, in particular in relation to those attending the meeting. Anyone who had not signed the attendance sheet could sign the sheet on the top table at the conclusion of the meeting.

12.4 Pauline Johnson understood that a number of locations in this area were under consideration as travellers sites, notably Parklees, Barkly Road and the Hillside Reception Centre. Christine Thornton said that the council would study a large variety of sites. Angela Gabriel said that the proposed sites would not happen , and urged people not to believe what they read in the papers.