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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting – 5th February 2015 Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speakers
 - I) Stewart Robinson, International Fun Fairs
 - II) A representative of Leeds Involving People
 - III) Andrew Lester, Hardhat ; a public relations firm acting on behalf of Asda Stores Ltd
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 8th January 2015
5. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 5th December 2013
6. Police Report
7. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan
- 8.. Report of the Committee meeting held on 15th January 2015
9. Correspondence
10. Possible Co-options to the Committee
11. The Future of the Beeston Community Forum
12. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Tuesday 8th January 2015

Attendance:- Mr R. Bell (in the chair in the absence of Christine Thornton), Mr. J. Adamson, Mr. D. Belton, Mrs. J. Belton, Mr. W. J. Birch, Mrs. J. Birch, Mr. D. Blackburn, Mrs. J. Blackburn, Mr. D. Bottomley, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. S. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Mr. J. Cole, Mrs. B. Cole, Mr. A. Cooper, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mrs. M. Dinsdale, Mrs. B. Draper, M. Fawcett, Mr. J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. J. Hook, Mrs. P. Heron, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. E. Leathem, D. McGough, A. McGrath, M. Munro, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. S. Pattison, Rev. L. Pearson, Mr. B. Ragan, Mrs B. Ragan, S. Rushworth, Mr. L. Senior, Mr. S. Sturman, Mr. G. Turton, Mr. G. Wainwright, Mrs. B. Walton, Mr. C. Ward, Mr. P. Whitehead, Mr. J. Withall, and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield (*Secretary's Note it is , once again, clear that not all those attending the meeting signed the attendance sheet. If anyone who attended the meeting is not included in the above list, the appropriate amendment to the minutes will be made*)

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Richard Bell welcomed those present to the meeting , hoped that everyone had a good Christmas and wished them a Happy New Year. He noted that as Christine Thornton is away, it fell to him to chair the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Congreve, Edna Newton, Councillor Adam Ogilvie (who was unwell), John Peckham, Christine Thornton and Noor Zaman.

3. Guest Speaker.

3.1 Richard Bell introduced the guest speaker, Rt.Hon. Hilary Benn MP. Hilary Benn wished Forum members a Happy New Year and thanked the Forum for its invitation to join members. He noted that 2014 had been quite a year with it ups and downs. He4 noted that the deaths of a number of people who were prominent in the community had occurred. He noted that this year would be a busy year, particularly in view of the General Election. He noted that elections involve choices but added that he does not wish to address the issue of the General Election in his remarks.

Hilary Benn said that he would not wish to allow the opportunity to pass without expressing sadness, sorrow and anger at the recent events in Paris. He praised the way in which the pencil came to be the symbol of solidarity and resistance, in Paris, elsewhere in France , in London and indeed in the House of Commons where pencils were raised in solidarity with cartoonists and writers. He also noted that this year would mark the tenth anniversary of the 7/7 bombings. He noted that he had written about this in the current issue of South Leeds Life. He praised the extent to which we stick together and do not allow ourselves to be divided. The alternative road is ruin.

Hilary Benn noted that there are a number of current issues . He explained that he would wish to ask Forum members about the impact of the Park and Ride facility ; he noted the strength of feeling in the Forum about this. He noted that he had been looking at comments made by Bill Birch about this matter in 2012. He added that there is obviously debate and discussion about the new Asda Store. He noted that Tesco has announced that their site (for which they had been refused planning permission to build a store) is up for sale. He noted that on the day of the meeting Tesco had announced the closure of 43 stores, and that there had been a feature in a news bulletin about a brand new Tesco store which had been built but which would never open. He noted that the Forum will recall the bidding war which had occurred in this area; a similar scenario had occurred in other areas, but this may be coming to an end.

Hilary Benn noted that a further local issue concerns the site of the former Ice Pak factory in Barkly Road. He noted that there had been a lot of discussion and views expressed about this matter. He would be making comments to the council about this planning application, but would wish to see what planning officers have to say.

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst issues dealt with were the congestion around Leeds City Railway Station, the Park and Ride facility at Elland Road, the use of car parking facilities at Elland Road, the proposed NGT system, the prevalence of road humps and 20mph speed limits , the charging of high insurance premiums to residents of the LS11 postal district, the possible installation of a passing loop on the railway line so as to serve Elland Road and the White Rose Centre and the Aspiring Communities Planning Application for the former Ice Pak factory.

4. Minutes of the Forum meeting held on 6th November 2014. Robert Winfield acknowledged that Greg Turton had been omitted from the list of those presenting apologies for absence and that the reference to ‘4th November 2014’ in item 4 of the agenda is a misprint. Robert Winfield also referred to the note in the minutes pointing out that not everyone attending the November meeting of the Forum actually completed the attendance sheet . He would be happy to move an amendment to the minutes to add anyone in this situation to the list of those attending; however, no such individual came forward. Subject to these points, the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting. It was noted that the attendance at the meeting exceeded the number of copies of the paperwork which had been prepared. Robert Winfield said he would bring a proposal to the committee to increase the number of copies produce.

5. Police Report

5.1 PCSO Rooks noted that the current crime statistics are okay and added that there had been a few burglaries in schools over the holidays. 3 to 5 people had been arrested; they are currently on conditions . He asked that if anyone gets any word from schools,, let them know.

5.2 Bill Birch noted that there has been a number of incidents involving burnt out cars. The same person’s car had been attacked twice in his street (Grovehall Parade) . He asked whether the police are closer to catching the person responsible . PCSO Rooks said that a suspect is on bail, having been arrested for 11 offences. There had been a briefing in the police station earlier today; investigations are ongoing. If members of the

Forum see anything suspicious, they should tell the police.

5.3 Richard Bell noted that people had been leaving cars in his street. The cars are then driven off by other people PCSO Goulding hoped that the police would be able to build up as much intelligence as possible. There have, so far been no arrests, but she suspects that this is part of a 'cash for crash' scam.

5.4 It was noted that there had been a mugging of an old lady in Middleton. Questions were asked as to whether anyone had been arrested. PCSO Goulding noted that her team does not cover Middleton, but she can find out .

5.5 A member of the audience asked about the riding of bicycles along pavements. She noted that her sister had been knocked down near Tommy Wass's. She then chased after the person responsible, who gave her abuse. She had phoned about the matter but nothing was done. PCSO Rooks noted that the police are about to acquire the power to impose fines for this. Stuart Casserley noted that around half of all cycle paths are on the pavements. PCSO Rooks said that the police would adopt a common sense approach to enforcement of this. Stuart Casserley pointed out that cyclists ride on the pavement along Dewsbury Road as this is safer. A member of the audience asked 'Safer for whom?' PCSO Goulding said that the police would impose fines, but they need to see the person involved riding a bicycle on a pavement. It might be necessary for the police to take a juvenile to his parents and advise the parents

5.6 Stuart Casserley asked the PCSOs whether their role had changed. He recalled that when the PCSOs first started, it was intended that they would patrol the local area and get to know local residents. He felt that this has not happened, although he acknowledged that PCSO Kirsty Johnston gets all over. Adam Cooper asked whether the PCSOs ride on bicycles. PCSO Goulding said that the PCSOs do ride on bicycles, but never on the pavement! She added that it is the role of the PCSOs to get to know residents but added that if there is a significant problem with burglaries in a particular area , they may be expected to help with this.

5.7 John Cunningham wondered whether anything can be done about parents allowing children to ride , after dark, on bicycles with no lights. PCSO Goulding noted that it is illegal to ride a bicycle with no lights.

5.8 A member of the audience who is a resident of Cross Flatts Drive wondered whether Anti Social Behaviour had risen recently. She had noticed more noise and had received letters from West Yorkshire Police. She wondered whether this is happening generally, or whether the letters had just been sent to residents of her street. PCSO Goulding said that if there area number of complaints , the police will issue letters to local residents to seek information. She added that high levels of noise can constitute anti social behaviour.

5.9 A member of the audience noted that she had approached taxi drivers who had left their engines running at 2 am to 3 am . Some drivers had even pulled up and urinated in the street . She wondered whether the Beeston Community Forum could write to taxi firms about this, and ask them to consider the interests of local residents. PCSO Rooks suggested taking the registration numbers of the taxis involved. It was , however noted that this is difficult during darkness. PCSO Rooks said that he would raise the issue with Insp.Bowen. Adam Cooper said that this had occurred in the Barklys , and there had been gatherings of three or four taxi drivers whose cars had blocked the road. Richard Bell felt that this is borderline Anti Social Behaviour. PCSO Goulding suggested if both the Forum and the police write, this might be more effective. It was agreed that the Forum would write to local taxi firms

6. Report of Subgroup Dealing with the Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston. Greg Turton noted that members of the Business Community had been contacted and received a pack detailing the activities being undertaken by the group seeking to set up a Neighbourhood Plan. Interested parties, including Leeds United FC , West Yorkshire Police , Yorkshire Water and Land Securities (as owners of the White Rose Centre) . He added that Mark Parry maintains and updates the website. The grant which we had received had terminated on 31st December, but we had received permission from the awarding body , the Communities Development fund, to spend the money on events which will take place during 2015, including meetings, public liability insurance, and the trip to Wolverhampton. Greg Turton noted that Heathfield, the area which we would be visiting, had adopted a Neighbourhood Plan in July , and has issues similar to our own. Greg Turton noted that he and Christine Thornton had attended a community led building conference in Huddersfield in November. He described this as a marvellous day. The conference related how an area which , 30 years ago had a considerable amount of crime has been regenerated with a lovely combination of private and social housing .

There had been a presentation from the Homes and Communities Agency. There were also presentations from the Ecology Bank and a person from Perry Barr, Birmingham.

Greg Turton , then turned to the best news to report; that is, that the Neighbourhood Forum has been designated. He paid tribute to everyone who has worked towards this end . He noted that the Steering Committee is now redundant, will stand down and awaits the Neighbourhood Forum to decide what the future holds. He described this as a historic moment for Beeston . He noted that several months ago, the Scottish Referendum had taken place . The UK stayed intact but the Scots will get increased devolution. This led to the remainder of the UK seeking devolution. Greg Turton noted that Greater Manchester had secured a package, and local councils in this area are discussing what is in it for them. The people of Beeston have, through the Neighbourhood Forum , been given an opportunity to determine what happens in the area over the next 10 to 15 years. He hoped that all members of the community will work on the issues identified by local residents in June following the distribution of the leaflets. Richard Bell moved a vote of thanks to Greg Turton. This was agreed.

7. Report of Committee Meetings held on 18th November 2014 and 20th December 2014. Richard Bell noted that much of the meeting on 20th November had been taken up with preparations for the Forum AGM. The meeting also discussed correspondence and the confusion which exists in certain circles regarding the Beeston Community Forum and the Save Our Beeston Campaign. There was also a discussion about an approach we had received in relation to making a documentary about potholes. There was also a discussion about the Neighbourhood Plan. There was a discussion as to whether issues relating to other organisations might have affected the Neighbourhood Plan. There was also a discussion about communication with businesses and the forthcoming trip to Wolverhampton. There was also a discussion about future meetings for the Beeston Community Forum if Beeston Village Community Centre ceased to be available . There was also a discussion about our letter of objection to the Aspiring Communities planning application for the former Ice Pak factory on Barkly Road. The letter of objection has since been published on the Public Access website. The meeting on 18th December was taken up with a discussion about guest speakers at meetings at our meetings during 2015. Richard Bell said that we are aiming to secure new guest speakers rather than having a situation in which the same questions are asked, and the same answers received.

8. Correspondence

8.1 Robert Winfield read a letter from Kate Mansell, Principal Planner, Leeds City Council in response to our letter expressing concerns about the handling, by Leeds City Council, of planning applications made by Asda Stores Limited for a petrol filling station and extended opening hours for their new store on Old Lane. She confirmed that the application for the Petrol filling station was considered by the South and West Plans Panel at its meeting on 4th December and it was not a delegated decision. The planning committee voted to accept the Officer recommendation to approve the application subject to conditions. She added that Asda's application to vary the opening hours of the store was considered and approved by the South and West Plans Panel on 4th September. She appreciated that whilst we are concerned that Asda have reneged on an earlier undertaking to the Beeston Community Forum (which she understands relates primarily to 24 hour opening) , the council must determine any planning application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. She noted that the Beeston Forum objected to the extension of opening hours and confirmed that this objection was fully reported to members of the plans panel. The opening hours approved by the plans panel are not 24 hours but permit opening between 0600 and 2400 Monday to Friday and 1000 to 2200 on Sundays and Bank Holidays for a temporary 12 month period after which (unless a further application is received) it will be restricted to 0800 to 2300 Mondays to Saturdays and 1000 to 2200 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

In response to our final point regarding the reference by Asda to 1000 expressions of support , she explained that she is not aware that Asda has made this reference. The report to Plans Panel in relation to the Petrol Filling Station does refer to the fact that in reviewing the representations to the outline application Our Beeston Campaign for the Asda Store, the outline application generated six objections with 11 representations in support including a petition with 1000 signatures. She added that in her view, the report is clear that the petition was submitted in relation to the outline application for the Asda store . It is also the case that the 1400 letters received from the Save Our Beeston Campaign were reported to the Plans Panel as part of the petrol

filling station application and were treated as an objection; indeed, it was for this reason that the application was put forward for determination by the plans panel. The content of the 1400 letters was reported in detail to the members although the report does comment that the letters do not raise site specific objections to the Petrol Station but make general points relating to any development in Beeston.

A member of the audience wondered whether what she described as 'the person responsible for by passing public opinion' would be prepared to attend a Forum meeting to justify this. Richard Bell pointed out that the planning application was approved as a result of a decision by the Plans Panel. Bill Birch felt that the planning officers report took no account of local concerns. It alluded to the fact that whilst a number of people supported the application, they tried to make it appear as though the expression of support relates to the Petrol Station. Bill Birch added that in the decision notice, it is stated that 'in reaching a decision, the case officer dealing with the application has worked with the applicant in a positive way to produce an acceptable scheme'. Bill Birch, however noted that the Case Officer had neither worked, nor liaised with the Forum. However, he stressed that he is not opposed to the building of a supermarket. Richard Bell noted that Asda had given a number of undertakings to alleviate the concerns of local residents. Bill Birch said that Asda had come before the Forum, agreed a number of changes to the plans, then went behind our backs and did what they wanted to. The Council then agreed to the planning application without saying 'this is not right'. Asda has committed a breach of trust. Robert Winfield noted that in relation to opening hours, Asda freely entered into a number of undertakings relating to opening hours for the new store in order to secure the withdrawal of our holding objection to their planning application. Asda had acknowledged in their correspondence with the Forum that they had sought to go back on their commitment. Robert Winfield said that Asda's claim that their action was motivated by public demand lacks credibility. Robert Winfield added that at no stage has the Forum discussed the possible building of a petrol filling station with Asda until Asda submitted the planning application for a petrol filling station (with no prior consultation with the Forum). A member of the audience noted that Asda had organised a meeting with local residents which had been attended by only 5 people. Bill Birch noted that he lives on Grovehall Parade and never received any notification of Asda's meeting. Where did they send information about the meeting. A member of the audience noted that Asda are organising a further meeting. Mary Dinsdale pointed out that there had been much discussion about air pollution. She noted that she is an asthma sufferer and said that the building of a petrol station would increase the number of cars, hence the level of pollution in the area. A member of the audience who attended the Plans Panel meeting at which the Petrol Station application had been approved said that members of the Plans Panel were told that there were eight objections. Adam Cooper noted that he had objected to the planning application on a number of grounds, but noted that his letter, together with other letters of objection could no longer be viewed on the Public Access website; a situation which he described as disgraceful. Adam Cooper noted that in his objection, he listed all the petrol stations within a radius of 1 to 1 ½ miles of the proposed petrol filling station. None of the existing petrol filling stations (including the Shell petrol station on Dewsbury Road, Sainsburys at the White Rose Centre and the site of the now demolished Woodman Inn) are close to residential properties, whilst the proposed petrol station will be within 50 to 100 metres of a residential property. This is far too close. Richard Bell suggested that residents might wish to decline to buy petrol from the proposed petrol station, which is a commercial operation. It was agreed that we would write to both Asda and the Planning Department expressing our views. Richard Bell said that Asda had been disingenuous.

8.2 Robert Winfield noted that Victoria Hinchliff Walker of the Leeds City Council Department had replied to the Forum's letter criticising the fact that she had expressed concerns about the Save Our Beeston Campaign without contacting any representative of the Save Our Beeston Campaign. Victoria Hinchliff Walker said that she was not sure she was expressing concerns about the Save Our Beeston Campaign, but noted that the group was unknown to planners, which seemed suddenly to be generating a lot of work and her department needed to know whether it is a formally set up group or a single individual. She added that her department receives a lot of correspondence relating to applications and whilst they get to know the main community groups, when a new group emerges, it makes sense to check it out before they engage. Richard Bell said that the engagement should have been directly with the Save Our Beeston Campaign. Adam Cooper described Victoria Hinchliff Walker's actions as unprofessional and added that residents pay the wages of those employed in the planning department. Richard Bell, however said that they must carry out due diligence on new groups.

9. Guest Speakers for 2015. Robert Winfield noted that a number of invitations to potential guest speakers had been sent, following a discussion at the Committee meeting on 18th December. There had been a limited number of responses, possibly as a result of the e mails being sent out just before Christmas. Robert Winfield noted that Dennis Holmes, the Deputy Director of Adult Social Care would attend the April Meeting. Stewart Robinson of International Fun Fairs (who, incidentally confirmed that the Valentine Fair would be taking place during February at Elland Road) would attend the February meeting, which precedes the fair and the March meeting, which follows it. Robert Winfield noted that this is a textbook case of an organiser of an event consulting the community, through the Forum. Robert Winfield added that Hilary Benn had been invited to attend the September meeting. He added that he hoped to set up a meeting dealing with policing issues involving Chris Bowen , the local Police Inspector and Mark Burns-Williamson OBE , the Police and Crime Commissioner. He had received an e mail from Mr Burns-Williamson's Office explaining that they are holding a diary meeting on Tuesday 13th January at which invitations to our and other meetings would be determined. Robert Winfield said that it is his intention to send chasing letters to invitees who had not responded after the outcome of the diary meeting is known

10. Co-options to the Committee. Adam Cooper expressed a wish to serve on the Committee. A proposal to elect him to the Committee was duly proposed and seconded and passed.

11. Any Other Business- A member of the audience said that residents of Wooler Drive and Wooler Avenue did not receive letters from Leeds City Council about the planning application by Aspiring Communities. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that the letters had been sent. Richard Bell noted that there is a perception that Councillor Angela Gabriel is responsible for the letters. It was stated that the Council has not responded to letters from local residents about the application , which is remarkable considering the proximity of the area to the building. A member of the audience said that she would wash comments such as 'Is this Progress' off a wall to the building.

Guest Speakers for Remaining Meetings in 2015

Thursday March 5th – Stewart Robinson, International Fun Fairs, Mark Burns—Williamson, OBE, Police and Crime Commissioner, West Yorkshire and Insp. Chris Bowen, West Yorkshire Police

Thursday 2nd April- Dennis Holmes, Deputy Director, Adult Social Services, Leeds City Council

Thursday 14th May- Speakers from the South Leeds Life website

Thursday 4th June – James Bailey, General Manager, White Rose Centre

Thursday 2nd July- no guest speaker arranged so far

Thursday 6th August – no guest speaker arranged so far

Thursday 3rd September- Rt.Hon. Hilary Benn

Thursday 1st October- Councillor James Lewis, Chairman, Metro and Chris Powell, First Leeds

Thursday 12th November- Councillor Keith Wakefield

Thursday 3rd December- Annual General Meeting