

**Chair: Christine Thornton, 40 Cross Flatts Avenue, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 7BG. Tel 0113 270 0875**

**Secretary: Mr Robert Winfield, 7 Allenby Gardens, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 5RW. Tel 0777 379 7820**

**E mail [robert.winfield1@ntlworld.com](mailto:robert.winfield1@ntlworld.com) Forum Website- [www.beestonforum.btck.co.uk](http://www.beestonforum.btck.co.uk)**

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## **BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM**

### **Beeston Forum General Meeting - Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Agenda**

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speakers I) Digital Angels  
ii) The Highways Agency**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017**
- 5. Police Report**
- 6. Discussion about the Beeston Neighbourhood Plan**
- 7. Correspondence**
- 8. Report of Committee Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017**
- 9. To consider and if thought fit pass a resolution to ratify the decision of the Beeston Community Forum Committee to co-opt Pam Jones as a member of the Committee**
- 10. Possible Co-options to the Committee**
- 11. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair) , Mr. W.J. Birch, Mrs. M. Broadbent , Mr. M. Clayton, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. C. Hendrick Ward, Mr. J. Hook, Miss P. Johnson, Mrs. P. Jones, Mr. A. Mahmood, Mrs. D. McGuigan, Mrs. M. Munro, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, Rev. L. Pearson and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting. She noted that the nights are drawing in , and it will soon be autumn
2. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Bell, Adam Cooper , John Cunningham and Arthur Kirby
3. Guest Speakers- Christine Thornton introduced the guest speakers, Rachel Benn, Leeds City Libraries , Angus Kinnear , Managing Director of Leeds United FC . Manuel Montineri, Head of Media for Leeds United FC was also in attendance
- 3.1 Rachel Benn noted that she is from the library service . Anyone who has been in a library might have seen the community librarian. Rachel Benn added that she has cards and fliers . She added that if anyone would like to use the library , there are groups, sessions and events . She said that the library wants to hear from the community and wants to get the community engaged , in order to meet the needs of residents. She added that there are three librarians working with the community of South Leeds . Rachel Benn

covers the libraries at Beeston, Hunslet and Dewsbury Road . She engages with community groups and people of all ages by providing events and sessions at libraries . She referred to the summer evening challenge for people aged 5 to 12 . This involved 180 children and was a fantastic event. This compares with 22 children who were involved in last summer's similar event so there has been a massive increase. The object is to encourage literacy, which falls away when pupils are away from school. There are also coffee mornings on the first Tuesday of each month, and lots of other events over the next few weeks. In addition a 'Hunslet Remembered ' group in order to share memories of Hunslet has been started. This involves people who have lived the whole, or a part of their lives in Hunslet. Rachel Benn recalled that a man had come to the first session who was nervous , and whose wife had died three months previously so he was on his own. He shared his memories and, although he said he would not come back, he did so. He also met someone else whose wife had also died . They had gone to school together but had not spoken for 45 years after falling out over a woman

Rachel Benn pointed out that libraries are becoming community hubs, for example, Rothwell and Dewsbury Road. There are open doors on Mondays and a big project is going on . Lots of services are provided under one roof . The one stop centre and the library at Dewsbury Road are now part of the same department . Beeston is however still a library. Rachel Benn noted that anyone who visits Dewsbury Road and sees the furniture would see childrens' toadstools. There are lots of brand new books and the library service is asking customers what books they would like to see. A library card can be obtained free of charge from any library in Leeds . These are available to children; the youngest library member is only two days old. A car enables a member to borrow up to 20 books free of charge. Rachel Benn noted that she now borrows lots of travelbooks which she had previously bought for £8.99 on Amazon. She recently borrowed five books dealing with Venice.

Rachel Benn pointed out that it is also possible to subscribe to the Zinio Smartphone app. This can be downloaded to a smartphone or tablet. A user who types in the phrase 'Leeds Library' will be prompted for his library card number . It is possible to download a wide range of magazines and receive notifications when these magazines when they arrive

3.2 The meeting opened to questions and comments from the floor. Christine Thornton noted that she does not use the library often as the people behind the desk are not very friendly and welcoming .They shield themselves from the public and forget they are public servants. Christine Thornton said that would stop her from going. Rachel Benn noted that she is working with this challenge and noted that some staff have been working with libraries for 35 years Mark Clayton, however, said that he had the opposite experience of the library service. He started taking his grandson to the library and was amazed at what they had , including toys. It was a lot better than he had thought. Rachel Benn noted that the Library Stock had been refreshed and included Rhyme Times and Story Times. It was also noted that there are miracles and bells.

3.3 Pauline Johnson noted that she visits the library (either Beeston Library or the Central Library ) often. The Central Library has 2 ½ inch maps , which she finds helpful. Christine Thornton asked whether the Library Service does genealogy. Rachel Benn says that this service is only offered by the Central Library, but this has fantastic archives . Colin Hendrick Ward noted that he had visited the Central Library to get information from 1969/70. He was seeking write ups from newspapers and microfiche. He found them all quickly. Someone had given him a photograph of a football team for which he had played ; the only player with his head missing was himself. He was able to print the photograph out for 50p

4. Christine Thornton introduced the second guest speaker, Angus Kinnear, Managing Director of Leeds United FC .

4.1 Angus Kinnear thanked the Forum for its invitation and said that it is great to be here. He explained that Leeds United FC is under new ownership and it is now 100 days into this new ownership. He apologised if he was engaging the local community too late, there has been a lot to do. The new owner of Leeds United FC believes in being a custodian of the club, not just an owner. He is not there for the money , but to make Leeds United FC a great organisation and to make history. The club must engage with the community and there needs to be a long dialogue as to how we work together . This relationship has not worked as well as it could and discussions have not been as good and productive as they could be . He noted that he is at the Forum more to listen than to talk. The new owners of Leeds United FC have done some good things. At the start of the season, the club bought back its ground. It is important to fans that the club owns the ground and it is a sign that we are here for the long term. The club has started with a fantastic response from the fans . The number of season ticket holders has increased from 14000 to 20000 . The average attendance has risen from 24000 to 30000 . He had met with ward councillors earlier in the week and identified three key areas. The first area is match day impact. A 30000 crowd brings positive and negatives. The club has a responsibility to manage this and look at what is working and what is not working. Issues include litter, parking and anti social behaviour by supporters coming to the ground. The club aims to work proactively with the community to fix these issues. Angus Kinnear also asked how the club can be more active in the community. The club foundation has a community programme . Hitherto, the Foundation has been seen as an offshoot of the club, rather than core to it . The Foundation is moving from the Pavilion to the main building. The role of the foundation is fund raising , but the club has not been supportive of the Foundation in raising funds. Angus Kinnear pointed out that he has spent ten years at Arsenal FC and four years at West Ham United FC . Both clubs have foundations which raise significant amounts of money which is invested in the local community . It is intended to have a fundraising strategy for local causes , but the input of the local community is needed in terms of where the funds should be going. . There is a fall back position in which the foundation can use players who have the capability to raise funds and deploy these locally.

The second issue is delivering programmes in the local community . The Club does good work but not at the breadth and depth it

should be It is targeted oddly geographically . This can also be done collaboratively.. One area where the club can deliver is in terms of education, not just for the young but for life . Sport and football can unlock aptitude and enthusiasm. As part of that, the aim is to make the ground accessible to the community rather than pricing out traditional supporters . Season tickets offer a 40% discount on tickets purchased on a match by match basis- this is one of the highest such discounts . One problem with Leeds United FC is that as it is not in the Premier League , many children feel that they cannot support the club . Angus Kinnear said that he does not want the shirts of rival teams walking the streets of the city. He referred to the 'Kids for a Quid' scheme . On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, Leeds United FC will play Ipswich FC at home. Under 16s will be charged £1. This will get people into the habit of supporting the local club.

The third issue concerns plans for Elland Road, and the development of the stadium and the land around it. Such plans are not advanced; there is a blank canvass stretching from Fullerton Road Car Park , the Park and Ride facility , and the area around the stadium. This area forms a horseshoe around the ground. The majority of this land is Council owned so development will take place in partnership with Leeds City Council and for the benefit of the community.

Angus Kinnear then spoke about Elland Road as a destination. Leeds United FC will be creating a forum made up of councillors and members of key residents' groups from Beeston, Hunslet and Holbeck which will meet with the club on a regular basis . The club will not just turn up at meetings and nod, without doing anything about the issues which are raised . The club is committed to making this Forum work. He would like to be in a situation in which in five years time , the club is famous for adding value to the community in which it is based. The club should be proud to belong to Leeds. Winning on the pitch helps but is not the be all and end all

4.2 The meeting opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Mark Parry raised the issue of parking and noted that Newcastle FC encourages fans to travel by public transport. He suggested that there should be signs to help people walk up to Leeds , and added that alternatives to the car should be encouraged. Angus Kinnear said that that is a good point. He acknowledged that he is new to the club , and said that he is surprised by the number of people coming by car. He noted that he has worked at the Emirates Stadium (Arsenal FC) and the Olympic Stadium (West Ham United FC ) . In both stadiums, the club had to make a commitment to the Government that 90-95% of fans would arrive by public transport. In London, this is helped by the tube, but he added that we also need Park and Ride and the planning of walking routes. Angus Kinnear noted that at present, he is coming to Leeds every week from London. At the end of the week he walks to the railway station. Leeds will not have the level of infrastructure of London , but he understands how easy it is to walk to the centre. On match days, it is easier to walk back to the railway station than drive . He added that air quality is important

4.3 Pauline Johnson asked whether Angus Kinnear has a list of dates and times when Leeds United FC are playing at home. Angus Kinnear noted that the production of such a list is difficult, because every two months, TV companies are able to move games , which is frustrating . A fixture list is produced at the start of the season, then the TV companies move matches. He said that the best way to keep abreast of this is through the internet, although those not on the internet will require some other means of getting the information. Councillor Angela Gabriel suggested publishing the information in South Leeds Life. Pauline Johnson noted that she owns a cat and that it is dangerous for the cat to be out when a match is taking place. She noted that although her street has a 20mph speed limit, traffic actually moves much faster down the middle of the road. Angus Kinnear said that he could send information which could be posted on the Forum website. Robert Winfield confirmed that he would be able to post such information on the Forum website. Pauline Johnson suggested that the information could also be posted on the Library website; Colin Hendrick Ward said that the information could be posted on the Save Our Beeston facebook group .Pauline Johnson noted that this information is announced by BBC Radio Leeds, but she does not always hear it

4.4 Bill Birch said that it is a great idea to use public transport , but Leeds has a lamentable transport system so that people drive. Additionally, Leeds City Council sold 1600 car parking spaces to enable a police station to be built on the site. He suggested that Leeds United FC should build a multi storey car park to remove the need for on street car parking. He noted that he had recently tried to catch a bus into Leeds. Bill Birch noted that Chris Powell of First Leeds had been invited to attend the July Forum meeting but he neither attended, nor was any explanation offered for his failure to attend. Robert Winfield pointed out that Chris Powell had left the employment of First Leeds , and that his departure had apparently been fairly recent as he had seen a job advertisement for his successor. He had also sought to contact Charles Donnelly, who has in the past been a guest speaker at Forum meetings on behalf of First Leeds, but the e mail has bounced back which would appear to indicate that Charles Donnelly has also left First Leeds . Robert Winfield said that he hoped that a representative from First Leeds would appear at a Forum meeting early in the new year. Angus Kinnear said that he was surprised about the Park and Ride scheme , and in particular , that there are no proposals to deck the area, which , he said , could be done in ways which are aesthetically pleasing. Parking is a key element. Colin Hendrick Ward feared that development would further reduce available car parking space. Angus Kinnear noted that discussions had taken place about Residents Car Parking . Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that quite a large area is being proposed and council officers had indicated that it needs to be a smaller area . This is a bone of contention. Christine Thornton pointed out that many people abandon cars on grass verges or indeed on any space which is large enough for a car. She added that she has never been to a football match so does not know what goes on apart from men running around kicking a ball. She suggested reminding fans that people live in the area . Angus Kinnear noted that the club communicates with fans by means of the club website and information sent to season ticket holders as to how to leave the ground. Fans do not adhere to this advice religiously!

4.5 A member of the audience wished to give positive feedback in relation to ticket prices . He took family to a game and was surprised to see that it only cost £54 for himself and two children for two games . There is therefore a positive element coming through

following complaints that Leeds United FC has been milking the fans. Angus Kinnear says that the manager wants the ground to be sold out as the team plays better in these circumstances . What works best, Kids for a Quid or bundling two games together.

4.6 Rev Lindsey Pearson noted that St Mary's Church sells burgers made from local produce on match days. Angus Kinnear said that a piece about this can be included in match programmes.

4.7 Bill Birch said that the previous owners of Leeds United FC planned to build a hotel and move the statue of Billy Bremner to accommodate this . Angus Kinnear said that the new owners have not gone into that detail. Angus Kinnear asked what would Leeds City Council like to be there. He noted that an object of Leeds City Council is to make Leeds child focussed and child friendly . Any plans would have less commercial elements. The fact that there is a lack of hotel rooms was mentioned at Leeds City Council. He added that there is a seven to ten year development plan which will be carried out following full consultation. . Pauline Johnson noted that she once went down to Elland Road to catch a bus , but the buses cannot get through. Angus Kinnear acknowledged that Elland Road pretty much becomes pedestrianised on match days. Cars and buses are going where there are too many pedestrians for the pavements. The fan base is not a bad bunch. Angus Kinnear offered to invite a group of regular Forum attendees to a match on a complementary basis. Steve Francis acknowledged that he supports Cardiff City FC .

4.8 Colin Hendrick Ward noted that the ground used to be covered in straw in cold weather . On one occasion 20 fans were asked to go to the ground to clear the straw. 200 turned up.

4.9 A member of the audience asked whether there were any plans to go around local schools . Angus Kinnear says that he has spoken to the Foundation which undertakes work in schools , but not schools local to this area. He has spoken to players reminding them and telling them about the fact that they have wider responsibilities than playing . Players are very supportive and are great role models , including people from tough backgrounds who are doing well . The club should get the players out locally. He added that a literacy programme at Arsenal FC targeted at people described as reluctant learners had been successful. There is excitement about reading in an environment of heroes . Rachel Benn noted that she works with Children at the Hunslet Club. Angus Kinnear noted that if they wanted to get the football coach in in the evening, they had to attend a literacy session earlier in the day

5. Minutes of the Forum meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017. Bill Birch drew the attention of the meeting to a typing error in remarks attributed to him . The phrase 'altered the Forum' should have read 'alerted the Forum'. Subject to this matter , the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting

6. Matter Arising – Steve Francis noted that he had collected the leaflets from Mark Parry's house

7. Police Report. It was noted that no representative of the police was in attendance. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that this situation is 'not good'

8. Beeston Neighbourhood Plan. Robert Winfield noted that the proposal to add Stank Hall Barn to the Neighbourhood area has now gone out to a six week consultation process similar to that which took place before the Neighbourhood Area was designated. The consultation process started on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September and will finish at 5p.m on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October . Individuals who live, work, or carry on business in Beeston are able to send comments on the proposal to Leeds City Council. Robert Winfield noted that the proposal to add Stank Hall Barn has consistently received large majorities in the Forum . The meeting agreed to a proposal that the Beeston Community Forum supports the proposals. This was agreed . Mark Parry pointed out that there is an open day at Stank Hall Barn on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September .

10. Correspondence. Robert Winfield noted that following the discussion about the change of venue for the last Forum meeting, he had written to Pat McGeever , Director of Health for All, Leeds

10.1 Robert Winfield noted that Pat McGeever , to her credit had replied within twenty minutes of Robert Winfield sending the letter to her by e mail; this was also late at night. Robert Winfield read the e mail . Pat McGeever said that she would agree to our request for two free hirings of the new Community Centre when this is available for use , and added that if she was able to do so , she would offer us every meeting free of charge. She added that Health for All will always acknowledge that the Beeston Community Forum and Better Action for Families were the founder members of the centre, and it was in response to our needs that Health for All undertook development of the centre and its subsequent redevelopment. Pat McGeever added that the pressure on Health for All staff, in particular Toshali Bhatia has been immense, and this will have led to any delays in communicating with user groups. Pat McGeever pointed out that she has been present at all the meetings needed before the centre closure and the potential for asbestos in the building led to the need for a speedier closure than they had wished . Other factors leading to the haste included the need to have demolition separated from the new build due to the need for each to take place during the school holidays. There was a delay in the lottery informing Health for All and then giving the go ahead regarding the grant award. Pat McGeever added that we should give credit where credit is due . Toshali Bhatia took the lead alongside her full time job as Health for All Healthy communities Manager in preparing and submitting the lottery bid which resulted in the million pound award. She has been the main contact with the lottery grant officer and has also been busy submitting additional bids to make up the total needed for the full centre build Pat McGeever added that I am sure we can see that it is little wonder if Toshali Bhatia was sending e mails late at night ; that shows her immense commitment and hard work in the service of the local community which the Forum also serves. Pat McGeever added that she would

appreciate us relaying these comments to others

10.2 Toshali Bhatia also replied. Robert Winfield read her reply. She noted that as also explained by Pat McGeever, she and other staff at Beeston Village Community Centre have been trying to manage many tasks involved with the move. These included.

1. Helping 11 groups to rehouse and many needed more help as they are not well established groups
2. Managing publicity and press due to lottery funding guidelines
3. Communicating with current partners and centre users regarding the deadlines and development of the new build
4. Liaising with the school especially due to the summer holidays (the school also had plans of work during the holidays so clarity between BVCC and school contractors has been important)
5. Ensuring that current utilities have been transferred as well as ensuring that groups have not overpaid (Health for All Finance Department will credit any overpayments to groups)
6. Safely moving current staff and their office furniture to the new base
7. Arranging storage for items from the centre which could be used in the new centre including furniture and kitchen equipment
8. Most importantly, the deadline had to be moved a week early. As explained in a phone conversation with Toshali Bhatia, this was due to the intrusive asbestos survey needed for the building. The centre was not suitable to use after 31<sup>st</sup> July as the demolition contractors wanted the possession of the centre as soon as possible to ensure that the deadlines promised to the school for demolition were kept.

Toshali Bhatia concluded by apologising if, in doing so, there has been any delay from her end. She reassured us that that was never the intention. She added that our support for the centre is very valuable. She will send out a newsletter soon keeping all groups aware of developments so far with the centre.

#### 11 Any Other Business

11.1 Bill Birch pointed out that the Highways Agency has recently published a consultation document in relation to Junctions 1-7 of the M621. Bill Birch noted that this is described as improvements scheme, but he added 'improvements for whom'. He noted that the proposals involve the closure of Junction 2a. This means that anyone leaving the motorway cannot access Holbeck or Beeston Hill. Bill Birch said that the traffic will be displaced and that this would lead to more traffic on Dewsbury Road and Wesley Street. The proposals would improve the situation for commuters who do not live in Leeds but not for local residents. He noted that there will be only one lane and said that this would lead to 40 ton lorries and buses in the fast lane of the motorway. Bill Birch noted that the Highways Agency states that the proposals are being brought forward on the grounds of safety. He described this as absolutely ridiculous. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that there are two consultation meetings, one at Hillside on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September and another meeting at St Matthews. These had been well advertised. Bill Birch asked why there is no consultation meeting in Beeston. The meeting agreed to proposal from Robert Winfield to invite representatives of the Highways Agency to the Forum meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October. It was noted that there will be a speaker from Digital Angels (it was noted that Morag Wright, who was to have been the speaker has left Digital Angels but they will provide an alternative speaker for what will be a short presentation).

11.2 Angela Gabriel noted that there will be an open day at the Police Station on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September

11.3 Angela Gabriel noted that there will be a plant sale for Beeston in Bloom outside the bookmakers and the chemist shop between 10.30am and 1p.m on Saturday 9 September

11.4 Rev Lindsey Pearson noted that work will shortly begin on repainting the church clock

11.5 A member of the audience noted that it is the next stage of the Skipton Building Society Grass Roots giving scheme. This needs votes. Questions were also asked as to how to apply for funding from Leeds United FC. Angus Kinnear pointed out that the Foundation will put programme together for people to apply

11.6 Ash Mahmood noted that the South Leeds Live at Home Multi faith festival will be taking place between 1 p.m and 3p.m on 13<sup>th</sup> September at St. Andrews. Food would be served afterwards. Christine Thornton wondered whether anyone would speak about Christian festivals and asked how many Muslims know about Christian festivals. Ash Mahmood wondered whether anyone is willing to do that

11.7 Rev Lindsey Pearson said that there would be a visit by Asher Ladies to the cookery group, teaching about baking. On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September there would be a coffee morning at the Parish Centre

11.8 Ash Mahmood pointed out that he knows of several members of the Muslim faith would like to attend Forum meetings but are reluctant to do so as the present venue for meetings is part of a pub. Christine Thornton pointed out that those attending meetings do not need to pass through the bar. Ash Mahmood pointed out that Muslims do not drink alcohol and the perception in the Muslim community is the venue is attached to a pub, and thus feel that they are unable to attend. Robert Winfield pointed out that this is a temporary venue and that the current expectation is that the replacement community centre will be available for meetings from June 2018. However, as with all construction projects, this timetable is subject to change. Angus Kinnear pointed out that meeting space is available at Elland Road free of charge, but Christine Thornton noted that this is quite a distance for many Forum members and there would be concerns about walking along Wesley Street late at night