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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 6th August 2015

Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speaker, Nigel Richardson, Director, Childrens Services, Leeds City Council**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum meeting held on 2nd July 2015**
- 5. Police Report**
- 6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan**
- 7. Report of the Committee meeting held on 16th July 2015**
- 8. Correspondence**
- 9. Beeston Village Community Centre**
- 10. Aspiring Communities planning application for former Ice Pak premises**
- 11. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 2nd July 2015

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. G. Almass, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W. J. Birch, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mrs. M. Broadbent, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mrs. J. Bush, Mr. S. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. A. Cooper, Mrs. H. Cooper, Mrs. D. Craven, Mrs. B. Draper, Mr. J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, Mr C. Hendrick Ward, Mr. J. Hook, Mr. R. Hunter, Mr. E. Leathem, Mr. P. Lewis, Mrs. L. Lewis, D. McGough, Mrs. D. McGuigan, Mr. J. Morton, Mrs. M. Munro, Miss E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. J. Peckham, Mr. S. Rushworth, Mr. S. Sturman, P. Whitehead and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting
2. Apologies for absence were received from Mary Dinsdale, Pauline Johnson, Arthur Kirby, Rev Lindsey Pearson and Greg Turton
3. Guest Speakers. Christine Thornton introduced the Guest Speakers; Alan Jones of Asda Stores Limited and Andrew Lester of HardHat Communications
- 3.1 Alan Jones explained that he works in the Property Communications team for Asda and is based at Asda House. He noted that the new Asda Store on Old Lane is on target to open on 13th July. He added that he is new to his position, having been in the post for two months. He is not, however new to Asda. He noted that the new store had been one of the first things to land on his desk. He noted that he was aware of the background to the construction of the new store and he was thus keen to attend a meeting of the Forum at the earliest opportunity. He was lucky to be in a position to attend the Forum before the opening of the new store. He noted that the new

store manager will be Robert Butterfield, who had apologised for his inability to attend the meeting due to his being on holiday. He noted that he hopes to attend a meeting of the Forum in the future.

Alan Jones noted that he had been made aware of the issues which had been raised recently in relation to the construction of the new store. He expressed the hope that they had been resolved. He added that the vast majority of the issues had been looked into and sorted out. He noted that he had heard nothing to suggest that the issues which had been raised are still ongoing. He noted that it is now just under two weeks until the new store opened. He added that if anything is ongoing, he would take the issue back and address it. He added that the petrol station is now open.

3.2 The meeting opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Stuart Casserley asked why the footpath adjacent to the store had been closed and not reopened. Alan Jones said that he had been made aware of the issues relating to the footpath and noted that it had been alleged that Asda had encroached beyond their boundary. Myra Munro noted that the footpath had been closed since the beginning of February which she described as disgusting. Alan Jones noted that it had been claimed that the hoarding was coming too far across into the footpath. However, Asda had checked the Land Registry Boundary, and found that the fence is in the correct place in relation to Asda's land ownership and Ordnance Survey plans.

3.3 Bill Birch said that Asda took over land not belonging to them, closed the footpath and dug it up. He added that there had been no application to close the footpath and Asda had kept it closed. He added that every time Asda appear at the Forum, they say that there has been a misunderstanding. This is then followed by another planning application which is submitted without consultation with local residents. He noted that, in total, Asda had submitted three planning applications on the site, and had never spoken to the Forum. Asda had, he said, beaten local residents into submission. Alan Jones said that it sounds like Asda have got it wrong. Bill Birch agreed that Asda had got it wrong, and he felt that there should be an apology from a senior member of Asda's management. Alan Jones said that he hopes to achieve that; he wanted to rebuild the confidence of the community. He appreciated that there has been inconvenience and accepted that it would take time for Asda to rebuild the confidence of the community. Bill Birch felt that Asda have a long way to go. Alan Jones noted that when Robert Butterfield is in place as the new store manager, Asda would hope to attend a further Forum meeting. Additionally, it is hoped to get residents to meet members of Asda's management in the store. Alan Jones noted that he will not be in the store every day.

3.4 Bill Birch noted that the issues had not arisen in relation to the operation of the store, but in connection with the construction of the store. The construction team had disregarded a series of planning conditions. There had, for instance, been wagons with mud, in breach of the planning conditions. Additionally, Asda had never told Leeds City Council about the start of their construction work. Alan Jones pointed out that in order to discharge this planning condition, they had to tell Leeds City Council. Bill Birch, however, noted that Asda did not inform Leeds City Council; moreover, Leeds City Council has confirmed that Asda did not inform Leeds City Council. Alan Jones confirmed that Robert Winfield had contacted him about the issue of dirt. He spoke to Asda's construction team. A member of the audience said that Asda had done nothing about it, and there had not been one letter to residents along Old Lane. There had been no apologies for the dust, which is being swallowed by children and which is horrendous. Additionally, workmen had been parking in a side street. Elderly people are having difficulty in getting to the Post Office. Alan Jones said that Asda's contractors ISG had been producing newsletters to local residents. He was asked for details of the addresses to which such newsletters had been sent. Alan Jones said that he would locate and confirm the distribution list for the newsletters, which were sent to local residents in a defined area. A member of the audience claimed that Asda had not considered anything about the interests of local residents. Alan Jones noted that Asda's contractors had secured permission from Leeds City Council to park on some roads near the site. Alan Jones accepted that it appears as though the contractors had been parking on other streets too. He apologised, but noted that this had not previously been raised with him as an issue. He had asked the contractors not to park on streets where no consent had been given to park.

3.5 Richard Bell noted that Back Lane, the footpath which had been closed by Asda is a public right of way, which was well used, so that its closure had caused a considerable amount of disruption. He suggested that the reason to close the path is to enable Asda to bring services to the building without disrupting the car park and the existing building. Asda had minimised disruption to their store but had put everyone else out. This was annoying. Alan Jones said that he would speak to the construction team about this matter. Richard Bell said that Asda had taken the view 'This is more important to us. Never mind them'. He added that this is not a good way of doing business. He told Alan Jones that his colleagues in Asda had made promises and given platitudes, then broke them. This alienates local residents and brings Asda's business into disrepute. Alan Jones said that he hopes to rebuild trust and confidence.

3.6 John Fenton said that Old Lane Post Office had been marooned as a result of parked contractors vehicles, and said that this is a total shambles. He pointed out that he gives elderly neighbours lifts to collect their pensions. He noted that he had to drive round the block and drop his passengers in the middle of the road. He added that Asda had been in a rush to open the petrol station, and argued that the site of the petrol station should have been used to park contractors' vehicles. He added that he has worked in supermarkets all his working life, and noted that local residents had managed without a petrol station for a long time. He noted that the damage had been done and argued that this issue had been handled badly. Alan Jones acknowledged that it looks that way.

3.7 Adam Cooper noted that there are eight illuminated signs yards from residential properties. These signs will light the sky; this is not right. He would hate to live in the houses on Old Lane. He added that he works in construction with Health and Safety managers and related one incident in which he was driving down Old Lane, but was unable to see due to a cloud of dust. He noted that there had been a diversion for pedestrians to continue on the other side of Old Lane. He noted that there are families with young children living in the area. He noted that the contractors had been cutting concrete slabs with no water suppression, and no masks. The dust had stopped motorists seeing in the road. He noted that the Health and Safety Executive is keen on measures to deal with silica dust, and

pointed out that he, himself deals with this . Adam Cooper added that the practices which he had seen are diabolical from a Health and Safety point of view. Adam Cooper recalled that he spoke to the construction team who responded by packing away their equipment and going away.

3.8 Adam Cooper noted that his parents live on Grovehall Parade . They had enjoyed reading edition 5 of the newsletter, which had been produced just as the store is about to open but wondered where editions 1 to 4 are . He noted that it is a requirement of the Considerate Constructors Scheme to produce newsletters. He added that edition 5 of the newsletter does not keep the local population informed of developments on the site. Alan Jones noted that the newsletters had been produced by ISG . He would find out where the newsletters had been sent to . He hoped that readers of the newsletters had found them useful and informative. He added that Robert Winfield had raised the issue of the dust with him. As a result of this, Alan Jones had visited the site and investigated the matter. He had also spoken to Asda's construction team and concluded that the construction workers described by Adam Cooper were actually employed by Leeds City Council on highway work. He noted that Asda has no jurisdiction over this team. With regard to the signage, Alan Jones appreciated that illuminated signs can come with a perception that they shine into bedrooms, but noted that Leeds City Council has given consent. He noted, however that consent had been withheld for one banner. He added that the environmental Health Officer would have considered the impact of the lighting . He noted that it is a planning condition that the lighting would be switched off outside the store opening hours. In addition, if it is found that the lighting is excessive. Asda would revisit this.

3.9 A member of the audience recalled stopping a worker in a van and saying that she would be willing to hang his manager from the nearest tree. It was argued that Asda had not listened. Bill Birch noted that when the issue of parking had been raised with Leeds City Council, it was noted that they had granted contractors permission to park on Oakhurst Mount, and that this is the only street where such permission had been granted. However, he noted that cars had been parked on the grass verge in Grovehall Road . Vans had also parked on Grovehall Parade . He noted that towards the end of the construction, there are more people on the site. He suspected that Asda would not want vehicles parking on the land used for the Petrol Station as they would want to make some money. Local residents, he said, have had enough. Alan Jones said that these issues would be communicated to the construction team and that subcontractors would speak to them again. He noted that Asda are paying the contractors. Bill Birch suggested that we need some command and control. A member of the audience asked whether Asda drive around the area and have a look.

3.10 Christine Thornton wondered whether Asda would give reassurances that the points discussed at the meeting would be addressed for the next Forum meeting at which Asda would appear. She said that there had been one catastrophe after another. Alan Jones noted that when construction work occurs, disruption is inevitable and that residents will expect there to be a certain level of disruption for a short while, but he noted that it sounds as though the actual level of disruption is way above what is acceptable . Christine Thornton felt that people who have represented Asda at previous meetings have not been up to the job.

3.11 A member of the audience asked about Sunday opening hours . He understood that Asda had sought 24 hour opening for the new store. Alan Jones noted that this is not correct and that the store would actually open between 7 am and 11pm on Monday to Saturday and 10am to 4pm on Sundays. It was noted by a member of the audience that these opening hours exceed the opening hours at Asda's new Middleton store which closes at 10p.m . Alan Jones noted that the Middleton Store is in a different area at a different location. Businesses expressed a demand for these hours. People come home at different times and the way people work is changing. He noted that Sunday opening hours are restricted by Sunday trading legislation. Steve Francis pointed out that Asda's Morley store formerly opened for 24 hours per day but now closes at 10p.m . He noted that Asda are saying that the Beeston store needed extended opening hours and asked why we are being treated differently. Alan Jones said that the opening hours at the Morley store had been reduced as it was not worth the store opening for the longer hours, but with the Beeston store the business wanted opening hours of 7 am to 11pm . Leeds City Council agreed that these opening hours are acceptable.

3.12 Richard Bell referred to delivery hours and pointed out that Asda had made undertakings related to limitations on delivery hours in order to avoid disruption to local residents particularly on Sundays. Agreements about delivery hours had not reflected what was previously discussed, and that the permission granted for delivery hours was at odds with what local residents had been promised. Local residents had been given a load of platitudes by Asda , who then went away and made applications for delivery hours which were at odds with what had been discussed. Alan Jones noted that the delivery hours are 6 am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 7 am to 10pm on Sunday . With regard to Monday to Saturday, this matches the store hours but with an extra hour in order to cater for customers coming in early. There is an expectation that there would be no disruption from delivery wagons. Alan Jones was then asked whether the undertaking given in relation to the direction of travel to the store be kept. Alan Jones said that every driver receives a drivers information card which sets out what each driver is and is not permitted to do. The card sets out details of potential routes to the store which are not permitted, together with details of parking places which are not permitted. He said that he would check as to how substantial the instructions are and he would also get an understanding about the number of deliveries. Richard Bell said that it is not in Asda's best interests to alienate local residents . If Asda engage with local residents and renege on undertakings which have been given to them, the consequence is to alienate them.

3.13 Julie Bush asked why the Beeston store would close at 11pm. Is the intention to accommodate shoppers who would otherwise visit the Morley and Middleton stores and the White Rose Centre? Alan Jones said he would find out the reasons for this, particularly in the light of the fact that some local residents have had their opening hours reduced . He said that most Asda stores nationally trade between 7 am and 11pm . Christine Thornton noted that people live next door to the Beeston store. This is not like the Middleton store , where no one lives close to the store. Alan Jones pointed out that the opening and delivery hours had been considered by Leeds City Council and Environmental Health.

3.14 Adam Cooper said that Asda representatives who have visited the Forum in the past have said that they have sat down with the

Beeston Community Forum. They tell local residents one thing, and the residents then find out that they get another thing. He had submitted an objection to the planning application for a petrol station as he felt that there is no need for such a facility. There are six petrol stations within a mile of the new store and none of them are within 100 yards of residential properties. The petrol station at Asda's Middleton store, which is around two miles away, is not close to houses. . He noted that the petrol station at the Old Lane store would have longer opening hours than the actual store, there is lighting and there are houses within 50 yards of the petrol station on three sides of the site. He said that Asda should use a site with extended hours where there is no interference with home life. Alan Jones said that customers want the broadest range of Asda services. If Asda were to open a new store without a petrol station, they would be asked why the store lacks a petrol station. Adam Cooper asked Alan Jones whether he was aware that there were 1500 objections to the petrol station but that the planning application had been pushed through without speaking to the objectors. Adam Cooper added that both the new store and Asda's national headquarters are in the LS11 postal district, and that Asda are therefore our neighbours. He felt that most people in this area will say that a petrol station is not needed. Alan Jones said that the opening hours at the petrol station will match those at the store. He said that there will be fewer cars coming to the site between 9.30p.m and 11p.m , and cars coming to the site will already be there. He therefore argued that there will be minimal disruption from the petrol station and, although he appreciated the residential aspect, he said that the house and light disturbance would be minimal. Adam Cooper, however felt that the petrol station is in the wrong place and that other petrol stations are nowhere near houses. He referred to a number of petrol stations in the area, notably Dewsbury Road , the White Rose Centre and the site of the former Woodman Inn. Richard Bell expressed concerns about the fuel in the petrol station and deliveries to the petrol station. Alan Jones said that there would be deliveries to the petrol station once or twice a week. Richard Bell asked whether deliveries would result in roads being blocked off. Alan Jones said that it would not.

3.15 Bill Birch said that the petrol station is symptomatic of the relationship between Asda and the local community. He noted that there were 1500 letters of objection to the petrol station from people who wanted Asda to come and speak to the local community. He added that the Planning Department had let local residents down. Asda were right to say that their plans had been fully authorised; they were fully authorised to ride roughshod and leave us in it. Alan Jones acknowledged that it appeared Asda had broken a promise to speak to local residents. Bill Birch said that the promise had been broken three times. Alan Jones said that Asda hope to start afresh. Alan Jones was then asked about the route which tanker deliveries will take . Alan Jones said that he would send the Forum a copy of the delivery management plan, which was a planning condition. A member of the audience pointed out that there is a rule prohibiting delivery vehicles going up Wesley Street.

3.16 Gohar Almass said that there had been a lot of retrospective discussion and that things could have been handled better in hindsight . He noted that businesses are part of the community. He felt that Asda should ensure that their mistakes are not repeated in the future. If anything is happening, residents should be consulted. It is not possible to have a successful business without consumer confidence; including feedback from the neighbourhood to the management . The relationship is based on respecting what people have to say. Alan Jones said that Asda have been a part of the community and want to build on that . He noted that the new Asda store will create 50 new jobs. Christine Thornton wondered whether these jobs will be going to local people. Alan Jones said that some of the jobs will go to local people and added that there is also an enlarged community life role in the form of a community champion who would be responsible for fund raising and charity work. This would involve getting colleagues into the community. Alan Jones acknowledged that he is unsure as to who the community champion would be , but said that he would get the name to the Forum. He hoped that he , or she will attend future Forum meetings. Adam Cooper acknowledged that the additional jobs are a positive.

3.17 Dennis Bottomley feared that if there is another fuel shortage, this would lead to traffic congestion along Old Lane. He wondered whether Asda have prepared for this, and said that the petrol station is in the wrong position. Alan Jones said that he does not expect such a scenario to happen, and pointed out that the plans for the petrol station had been submitted to highways officers. Additionally, Asda have highways specialists working for them. He doubted whether Council Highways Officers would assess plans based on a fuel shortage. Alan Jones said that the last thing that Asda would wish to do is to frustrate customers. He insisted that the layout of the new store will work. Alan Jones was nevertheless asked what Asda would do if the layout does not work.

3.18 A member of the audience noted that supermarkets sell cheap fuel, and suggested that the Asda petrol station will attract taxis and private hire vehicles, not just people going to shop. Alan Jones, however said that it is the view of highways experts that petrol stations at supermarkets only attract those going to the store. Adam Cooper said that Asda were seeking to extract the maximum profit from the available land.

3.19 John Hook observed that every time the Forum invites a representative of Asda , a different person attends. By the time an Asda representative finds out about any issues with local residents, the representative has moved on. He noted that the site has been ongoing from January , but that Alan Jones had only been in his present position for two months. Alan Jones said that this situation is not intentional. John Hook, however noted that Asda is a subsidiary of WalMart Inc , which he said had been employing tactics similar to those which he said were now being used by Asda for years. He noted that he has lived in the USA and Canada, and he said that WalMart frequently put new faces in place so that they do not know what is going on. Alan Jones repeated that this is not intentional and insisted that he would be at the next Forum meeting to which as Asda representative is invited. John Hook acknowledged that this might not be intentional, but it is happening .

3.20 Julie Bush noted that a lot of the problems which have been discussed are retrospective and Asda can do little but apologise. She asked about the situation after the new Asda store is built. Will there be contact between Asda and the Forum and will there be a single point of contact. Will someone look at the issues raised by the community such as opening hours and lighting. These issues will not end when the new store is open. Alan Jones said that there would be these things and Asda will look at it . The point of contact will be

the new store manager and Alan Jones said that he would be keen for him to attend the Forum. It would also be possible for shoppers to stop him on the shop floor. The Community Life Champion, and Rob Butterfield, the Store manager, would be happy to attend future Forum meetings. He noted that the store manager is at the store on a day to day basis. However, Christine Thornton felt that a store manager was not good enough as a guest speaker at the Forum, because the store manager just looks after the store. Alan Jones said that he is at Asda House to help when help is required. He would support Robert Butterfield. Julie Bush wondered whether decisions about opening hours would be taken by the store manager. Alan Jones said that a store manager would have a lot of influence in these decisions. He is a retailer and knows the store. However, Christine Thornton wondered whether the store manager would actually take decisions of this nature. Alan Jones said that decisions of this nature would be taken by Robert Butterfield, his senior manager in the Region and the retail team at Asda House.

3.21 Rosemary Casserley said that Asda took over the former Netto store, and had planning permission for a new store. Tesco then came along, Asda then came along, the community backed Asda, but Asda kept changing their plans. She added that Leeds City Council have a lot to answer for. She said that Leeds City Council had taken the view 'Asda are going to have a store, there is no difference if there is a petrol station'. She said that Asda had lied to put a foot in the door. She said that Asda had agreed the opening hours of the store with the Beeston Community Forum, but had then sought planning permission involving longer opening hours than agreed. She felt that Asda should have extended the opening hours after the store had opened. The fact that the opening hours were extended before the opening of the store had antagonised residents. She added that she has used the petrol station and noted that there is a separate entrance for the petrol station and that the store is not yet open. She added that the petrol is cheap and noted that there are a lot of private hire vehicles and fewer cars in this area. She said that the petrol station is likely to be used by a large number of private hire vehicles even if this does not normally happen elsewhere. She argued that Asda are making exceptions for the new Beeston store whilst saying that it will operate like any other store. She said that if cheap petrol is accessible in a residential area, the petrol station will be used.

3.22 John Peckham pointed out that the responsibility for building a store does not lie with the with the store manager or a community champion, but with Asda House. He expressed concerns about petrol tankers coming into a residential area to deliver, and also noted that there are four schools in the area. Traffic for the schools passes close to the petrol station. He feared that a major catastrophe could result from any accident at the wrong time of the day. Alan Jones said that Asda's construction team is in charge of building its stores. The store manager is a retailer. The Delivery Management plan takes account of services, including schools in the local area. He added that safety is paramount for Asda.

3.23 Steve Francis noted that HardHat (Laura Harrison) had attended the last meeting at which Asda were represented, and had not communicated with us. Steve Francis said that he should have done. Andrew Lester said that a response to all the questions which had been raised at that meeting had been formulated, sent to Robert Winfield and offered to send him a copy of the correspondence. This was declined. Steve Francis also asked Andrew Lester what he feels about the discussion which had just taken place. Andrew Lester found it an honest discussion and noted that he and Alan Jones had worked together on a number of Asda sites. He had seen him deliver on sites in Bristol, Ipswich and Otley. If Asda did not have confidence in his firm, they would not pay HardHat's bills for them to turn up to meetings such as this.

3.24 Christine Thornton concluded the session by noting that Asda had heard the views of local residents and acknowledged misunderstandings. The Forum would want the lines of communication to be left open. The Forum would want to be contacting Asda and getting sensible answers.

4. The minutes of the Forum meeting held on 4th June 2015 had been circulated to members present at the meeting. Gohar Almass pointed out that he was present at the meeting even though he is not named in the list of those attending. Subject to this issue, the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Police Report. It was noted that no members of the police force were present, nor had any explanation been given for their absence. Robert Winfield expressed his concern about this. Steve Francis noted that Insp. Bowen had been promoted and had moved away from the area. Richard Bell said that the attendance of Forum meetings by the police is part of their engagement with the community. Robert Winfield wondered whether the police still advertise the Forum meetings as Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings. If so, their presence at them is even more important. Christine Thornton pointed out that a number of people involved in the sexual abuse grooming case had been sentenced; she noted that three of them live in her street. A member of the audience asked whether there is any more news in relation to the arrest of the rape suspect in Slovakia. After some discussion, it was agreed that Robert Winfield would write to Acting Insp. Arrowsuch to express our concerns about the absence of police representatives from the last two Forum meetings.

6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Forum. Mark Parry noted that as Greg Turton is unable to be present at the meeting, he would make the report of the Neighbourhood Forum. There had been some interest generated at the recent Beeston Festival, and a number of new members had been recruited. The next two meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum had been fixed. The meetings would take place at 7.30p.m on Tuesday 1st September and Tuesday 1st December at Beeston Village Community Centre. The last committee meeting of the Neighbourhood Forum had taken place on 23rd June. There had been a lot of discussion about the disposal of land on the Parkwoods by Leeds City Council. He stressed that the Neighbourhood Forum is not opposed to the building of affordable housing on the Parkwood estate but is unhappy about the lack of consultation about the use of the land. Mark Parry noted that he and Greg Turton had attended the last meeting of the Beeston Village Community Centre Users meeting. He added that it is also intended that the Task Group leaders will be contacting the members of their task groups with a view to organising suitable meetings. Mark Parry added that

the Neighbourhood Forum has been successful in its grant application; the funds will mainly be spent on the fees of Shaun Hanson, the Neighbourhood Forum's consultant. The Neighbourhood Forum had also applied for other grants and a bank account was being opened.

7. Report of Committee meeting held on 18th June 2015. Christine Thornton noted that no matters had been discussed which are not on the agenda for the Forum meeting currently taking place.

8. Correspondence. Robert Winfield pointed out that he had received no correspondence since the last meeting of the Committee. A number of items of correspondence had been reported to the committee, notably a number of e mails from Asda Stores Limited. Robert Winfield noted that the matters dealt with by that correspondence had been dealt with in the session involving Alan Jones and Andrew Lester which had just taken place. Robert Winfield had also received an e mail from Mark Atkinson of Leeds City Council about the safety of the area around Beeston Village Community Centre. This would be dealt with in the report about Beeston Village Community Centre. Robert Winfield added that when Leeds City Council had granted planning permission for the new Asda Store on Old Lane the planning application had included longer Sunday opening hours than are permitted by law. He did not feel that the Leeds City Council Planning Department were capable of such an error but he had been proven wrong.

9. Beeston Village Community Centre. Robert Winfield reported that a meeting of the Beeston Village Community Centre Users Group had taken place on Monday 22nd June and had been attended by himself and Doris Brooke, and by Mark Parry and Greg Turton, who were representing the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum. The meeting, which Robert Winfield described as the longest and most useful meeting in the history of the committee, was dominated by two issues; the plans for a replacement community centre for which Health for All (Leeds) which rents the building from Leeds City Council, is seeking lottery funding, and the issue of safety in the area around the building.

Dealing with the issue of plans for the new building, it was noted that the current building has plenty of maintenance issues, particularly in relation to the roof. Health for All (Leeds) is seeking lottery funding for a replacement building. There were three alternative schemes; a new building with a lower floor only, the preferred option involving a two storey building on the footprint of the present building, or a single storey building which would be larger than the present building. The plans which had originally been drawn up were for a building costing £800000, which would give rise to difficulties in view of the fact that the maximum grant available is £500000. The plans were scaled down so as to reduce the cost to £560000. Dealing with the proposals for the new building, it was recognised that the kitchen is valuable, and it was felt that there should be a new confidential area where members of the public can discuss sensitive issues such as debt and alcohol problems. It was recognised that there is a need for storage facilities for toys and also a play area. A lift will be provided.

It was stated that the entrance for the new building will be located where the toilets in the present building are. The ideal location for the entrance would be impossible as this would encroach upon the village green. This would, however mean that access to the building would be improved. Car parking spaces had been scaled back to reduce costs. It was noted that Health for All have experience in replacing buildings. Tenants Hall, the Headquarters of Health for All is a replacement of an old building.

With regard to the safety of visitors to the building, three issues had been identified; poor lighting in the area around the building, uneven paths in the area around the building and the tendency for paths to become muddy and slippery in wet weather. It was noted that Mark Atkinson of Leeds City Council had sent an e mail in response to an enquiry raised by Robert Winfield on behalf of the Beeston Community Forum. The e mail incorporated a map which was shaded to show which roads and footpaths in the area of the community centre had been adopted. There was widespread surprise that a part of St. Anthony's Drive, between the last of the houses and the community centre, is apparently unadopted, even though that section of the road has road markings, and is fitted with lighting columns and even road humps. It was noted that the safety of pupils travelling to and from Hugh Gaitskell School may be affected by the same issues which affect visitors to Beeston Village Community Centre. Robert Winfield noted that the obscurity as to the ownership of some of the land around Beeston Village Community Centre had obstructed a solution to the problems which had just been described. Robert Winfield wondered why it had been so difficult to determine who owns the land around the community centre. He suspected that as all the buildings in the area are owned by Leeds City Council, it is likely that the land is owned by some Leeds City Council Department. With regard to poor lighting, there were two issues, the fact that the growth of trees in the area blocks the light, and the reluctance of Hugh Gaitskell School to leave their external lighting on after school hours. Robert Winfield noted that the meeting had also been told that there have been instances of gangs of youths hiding in trees and throwing bottles. He explained that had the police been present at the present meeting, he would have raised this issue.

A discussion ensued. Robert Winfield noted that as a result of a decision of the committee of the Beeston Forum Committee, he had drafted a letter about these issues. He pointed out that although a new building would address the issues of safety which had been discussed, this would be of no consolation to anyone who might be injured in the meantime. The Committee had taken the view that Leeds City Council should adopt key footpaths on Health and Safety grounds and devise a solution.

Bill Birch felt that the plans are incorrect and that the entrance for the new building would be located in the place in which the fire exit for the present building is located. Eddie Leatham, who is a Governor of Hugh Gaitskell School, noted that he had attended a separate meeting with Toshali Bhatia immediately before the meeting of the Users Committee. He wondered whether the plans which had been displayed at the Users Committee meeting are current. It was also his understanding that the entrance for the new building would be located in the same place as the fire exit for the present building. Christine Thornton stressed that it is still early days for the plans. Adam Cooper wondered whether buildings owned by Leeds City Council are covered by the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. He felt that the footpaths leading to the building are surely not compliant with the requirements of the Disability

Discrimination Act. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that the key issue is surely the ownership of the footpath, and who laid it. She felt that the footpath needs to be taken up and relaid. Richard Bell said that it is hard to see how there could be any owner other than Leeds City Council. He said that if no one owns the land, he would set up a camp site on it! . Stuart Casserley noted that Hugh Gaitskell School had secured permission to extend their car park and fence it off. Christine Thornton said that it beggars belief that the council cannot say who owns the footpaths around the community centre. Bill Birch, however noted that some things go back a long way . he recalled that he had been a Governor of St Luke's School, when it had been discovered that some land was owned by West Yorkshire County Council, even after the County Council had been abolished. There had been some problems transferring the ownership of the land. Angela Gabriel recalled that when she was a governor of Hugh Gaitskell School, the school had cut down a cherry tree which was located on the school's property. She added that Hugh Gaitskell School is no longer owned by Leeds City Council, but owned by a Trust. The budget for the school goes directly to the Trust, with Leeds City Council not being involved.

Robert Winfield noted that following the meeting of the Users Committee, there had been some confusion as to whether the plans would involve a part of the present building being preserved, or whether the entire building would be demolished. Robert Winfield had clarified the issue with Toshali Bhatia of Health for All (Leeds). The foundations for the present building would be used for the new building, the whole of the existing building from the foundations upwards would be demolished (so that no part of the building would be preserved); however fixtures and fittings from the existing building would be reused, wherever possible.

A discussion took place as to whether the draft of the letter about safety issues relating to the community centre should be amended to incorporate the point made by Adam Cooper about compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Richard Bell feared that this could lead to perverse consequences, possibly including the closure of the Community Centre. It was resolved that the letter would not be amended in this way. Eddie Leatham noted that the lottery bid by Health for All (Leeds) is now at the second stage, and pointed out that 80% of applications reaching this stage are approved.

A member of the audience asked when the demolition of the community centre would take place and whether there is any risk that the building would be demolished in circumstances where there is no certainty that the building would be replaced. A member of the audience noted that the planning application for the former Ice Pak factory on Barkly Road had been criticised on the basis that there are significant existing community facilities in the area, and that the additional community facilities which would supposedly be provided at the new building would be superfluous. Christine Thornton noted that the building would be demolished only when funding for a replacement is agreed. Eddie Leatham envisaged a timescale of 18 months to 2 years. Christine Thornton suspected that if funding is not secured for a replacement building, repairs would be made to the existing building to bring it up to standard.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Steve Francis noted that Beeston Primary School, Hugh Gaitskell School and Cockburn School are all in consultation with a view to becoming academies. He understood that Peter Nuttall of Cockburn High School was supposed to be getting in contact, and had expected such contact to have been raised at the meeting under correspondence. Robert Winfield confirmed that he had not heard from Peter Nuttall. Rosemary Casserley understood that Peter Nuttall would be retiring shortly; however Angela Gabriel pointed out that he would be staying on. Steve Francis said that he would forward copies of e-mails relating to Beeston Primary School to Robert Winfield. Gohar Almass noted that there had been no consultation with parents

10.2 Adam Cooper pointed out that there had been changes and updates to the planning application by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak premises on Barkly Road. He wondered whether the Forum would be making a fresh objection, and noted that there had been a number of revised documents and drawings. The Islamic element of the building was being toned down with cosmetic changes, but the concerns of residents had not been addressed. Christine Thornton asked whether existing objections to the planning application would stand. Bill Birch felt that we should lodge a further objection, noting our disappointment that although Aspiring Communities claimed to have taken account of a large number of issues which had been raised by residents, they have in fact taken account of none of them. Aspiring Communities had simply erected a smokescreen. Councillor David Congreve said that individuals should object, if they wish. It was agreed that Robert Winfield would prepare a draft of a letter of objection and e-mail this to members of the committee for consideration.

10.3 Dennis Bottomley noted that Councillor Keith Wakefield, who had recently stepped down as Leader of Leeds City Council was due to appear as a guest speaker at the Forum meeting on 12th November. He wondered what the position is. Robert Winfield noted that Keith Wakefield had indeed accepted an invitation to attend the meeting on 12th November when he was Leader of Leeds City Council and when, presumably, it was expected that he would still be Leeds City Council on 12th November. Following Keith Wakefield's decision to step down from this position, the Committee decided to write to Keith Wakefield asking whether he would wish to withdraw from the invitation, and to his successor Councillor Judith Blake asking whether she would be happy to take over the engagement. Robert Winfield confirmed that Keith Wakefield had indeed withdrawn and Judith Blake taken over the engagement.

10.4 Julie Bush wondered whether anyone from the Leeds City Council Planning Department had ever appeared as a guest speaker at a Forum meeting to explain planning issues. Christine Thornton suspected that planning matters are probably better dealt with by the Neighbourhood Forum. Robert Winfield said that there might be difficulties arising from Planning Officers discussing ongoing planning applications or even being present at a meeting where such planning applications were being discussed. He noted that large companies which have submitted planning applications are likely to engage expensive lawyers and would not hesitate to take action if anything has occurred which would be prejudicial to the proper consideration of a planning application. Christine Thornton noted that planning officers would not be able to discuss specific applications, but noted that there had been a number of instances of people building garages, daumas, large walls and even bungalows in back gardens. She noted that the planning laws had been relaxed. A

member of the audience noted that Asda had taken as much rope as they had been given by Leeds City Council and argued that there had been a lack of enforcement of planning conditions by the council. Adam Cooper said that enforcement is difficult due to a lack of resources. Unless residents tell the council about breaches of planning conditions, nothing would be done. He noted that a near neighbour had built a seven foot wall. A complaint was made and enforcement action had been taken. It was noted that every Forum meeting during 2015 has guest speakers invited , but that Planning Officers might be invited as guest speakers for a Forum meeting in 2016. Robert Winfield pointed out that the December committee meeting, immediately after the Forum AGM considers guest speakers for the coming year, invitations are issued, and a programme of guest speakers for the year takes shape. Councillor Adam Ogilvie suggested inviting Tim Hill, the new Chief Planning Officer for Leeds City Council to a meeting to discuss general planning issues and enforcement.

10.5 Christine Thornton noted that judging for Beeston In Bloom would take place on 9th July.

10.6 Christine Thornton noted that she had been invited to a function taking place at Leeds Civic Hall on the Tuesday following the meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 7/7 bombings.