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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 6th March 2014

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speakers- i) Stewart Robinson, International Fun Fairs
ii) Tom Smith, Leeds City Council
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 6th February 2014
5. Police Report
6. Report of the subgroup dealing with a Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston
7. Report of Committee meeting held on Thursday 20th February 2014
- 8.. Correspondence
9. Beeston Village Community Centre
10. Possible Co-options to the Committee
11. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 6th February 2014

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), J.K. Adamson, Mr. R. Adamson, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. D. Blackburn, J. Blackburn, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. R. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. A. Cooper, W. Cooper, Mrs. M. Dinsdale, Mr. J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, Mr. J. Hodgson, D. Holden, J. Holden, Mr. J. Hook, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. A. Mahmood, Mr. Y. Mahmood, Mrs. M. Mason, A. McGrath, Mr. J. Morton, Miss. E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, PCSO J. Rooks, West Yorkshire Police, Mr. G. Turton, and Mr.R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance on what she described as a miserable night
2. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Birch, Insp. Chris Bowen (West Yorkshire Police), Councillor Angela Gabriel, John Peckham and Noor Zaman
3. Christine Thornton noted that as the guest speakers for the meeting had not yet arrived, the minutes of the meeting would be considered. It was agreed to accept the minutes as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.
4. Christine Thornton , introduced the guest speakers (who had arrived); Martin Wright , of Leeds City Council who would deal with the Future of the Elland Road Valentine Fair in the light of the construction of the Park and Ride facility at Elland Road , and Stewart Robinson of International Fun Fairs, the organisers of the fair.
- 4.1 Martin Wright noted that the fair would go ahead this year. He noted that the Park and Ride facility is under construction, and that it

is hoped that this would tidy up the land . The building of the Park and Ride facility is taking place earlier than intended as this is deemed to be a necessity for the forthcoming heat of the Tour De France. He added that Metro would want to try out the Park and Ride before the Tour De France comes to Leeds on July 5th. Martin Wright added that the building of the Park and Ride facility would not otherwise have started until the completion of the football season. Martin Wright added that the Ice Rink is moving a stage ahead but this will take land which might otherwise have been used for the fair. However , Martin Wright pointed out that Leeds City Council has acquired the former BRS Parcels yard at the rear of the stadium. This means that there should be sufficient car parking for normal match days and that there should be no on street parking. Christine Thornton, however pointed out that on street car parking takes place throughout most of Beeston and Holbeck . Pauline Johnson noted that the park and ride would close on weekend matchdays. Martin Wright confirmed that this is the case, but stressed that he is employed by the Parks and Countryside Department of Leeds City Council , rather than by the Highways Department and as such he does not have expert knowledge about the Park and Ride facility.

Martin Wright turned to the issue of whether it would be possible to hold the Valentine Fair at Elland Road in 2015. He said that he would like to see the Fair at Elland Road in 2015, but does not know whether that will be possible. He would want to see what land is left after the current building works. Another issue is how busy the Park and Ride facility would prove to be between Mondays and Fridays. Some research had been carried out into this but Martin Wright said that this is 'a bit suck and see' . He added that Leeds City Council would wish to see the Park and Ride working before formulating plans. As such, it is a little early to make firm decisions.

4.2 The meeting then considered a number of questions from the audience . Amongst topics dealt with were whether the fair would return to central Leeds if it could no longer be held at Elland Road, and fencing between the Southleigh Estate and Middleton Woods

5. Stewart Robinson then discussed the fair.. He said that the fair is the same as normal. There are no football matches taking place during the fair. It was originally believed that there would be a football match but this has changed. He added that International Fun Fairs had believed that it would be necessary for them to take a lot of empty equipment to Woodhouse Moor, but this proved to be unnecessary , as there is a lot more space at Elland Road than originally anticipated. The layout of the fair will be slightly different as a result of the current construction works. The entrance will be a little different. It will be closer to the new police station, which will block out some of the noise. Stewart Robinson stressed that the noise would be monitored , and there had been a letter drop to local properties, asking residents to telephone International Fun Fairs if there are any problems. Stewart Robinson noted that the fair will start on 13th February and that there will be a free firework display on the evening of 14th February. On the Thursday afternoon, there will be a session for children with special needs to which the Martin House organisation will bring a group of children. There will be 200 children from a number of different schools who will have the opportunity to sample free rides at a time when the fair is not open to the public. Similar sessions had proved to be very successful in the past. Stewart Robinson added that thousands of leaflets incorporating money off coupons had been given out to all schools in the area. Schools could obtain more such leaflets, if they need to. Rides cost £1 during half term week and there is also a midweek special under which adult rides cost £1.50. With regard to traffic in the area, cones would be erected along Elland Road in order to prevent parking. The cones would first be put down on the Thursday morning when the fair starts until the evening. Cones would be taken up, and put back every morning. Litter would be collected before 9 a.m on each morning.

With regard to public order, Stewart Robinson said that problems in connection with public order stopped when an entrance fee to the fair was introduced seven years ago. Gangs and anyone else who looks suspicious will be checked upon entry to the fair. The fair will close at around 10p.m on most nights although it will probably close slightly later on the evening of the firework display and on Saturdays. The fair will open at 1p.m on each day. It is one of the largest fairs in Yorkshire. Stewart Robinson described Hull fair as massive , noting that it has 5 to 10 of each ride, but there is only one of each ride at Elland Road. He added that there is one new ride from France and one from Belgium. He said that this is a unique fair and that this is attended by people from Leeds and elsewhere. He looks forward to the fair as do a lot of the showmen. There are twenty five large family rides. Martin House, the fair's charity , has raised thousands of pounds over the years.

Stewart Robinson pointed out that on the morning of the first Sunday of the fair (11 a.m to 4p.m) , there is a fairground model show at the banqueting suite of Leeds United FC. It is an interesting show and it is well worth a trip down. Sandra Burton asked whether the models are working models. Stewart Robinson pointed out that there is a little traction engine outside the show , and added that the work which people put into the models is unbelievable. There is a prize for the best model which is normally judged by councillors or the Lord Mayor. He noted that a Leeds man; Tony Main has working models and photographs and puts the show on.

5.1 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst the issues dealt with was that of the advertising of the fair

6. Matters Arising from the minutes

6.1 Mark Parry drew attention to a typing error in connection with the revised closing date for representations relating to the Aspiring Communities Planning Application. Robert Winfield undertook to ensure that this is corrected before the minutes are posted on the internet.

6.2 Steve Francis referred to a comment in paragraph 10.8 of the minutes referring to the doubling of the size of Beeston Primary School . He pointed out that the school has increased in size by one class size a year for a number of years. The school will expand in size by one third, not double. The number of pupils coming into the school has increased by 90. The only building work taking place is the

building of a new school hall to accommodate the whole school.

7. Police Report - PCSO Jonny Rooks explained that in the absence of Insp. Chris Bowen, he would give the police report. He noted that crime statistics are still down. There has been one more distraction burglary but nothing else. PCSO Rooks said that he would speak to Doris Brooke at the conclusion of the meeting about the matter which had been recorded in the minutes of the last meeting.

7.1 Christine Thornton said that there have been a lot of speeding cars but these drive so quickly that it is impossible to record the registration number. Adam Cooper noted that on Beeston Road, a police car has been parked on the other side of the graveyard. He said that the police are wise to do this on a regular basis as there are a lot of cars travelling at around 60 to 70 mph. PCSO Rooks said that cars had been observed overtaking each other. The cars are clearly racing. Adam Cooper said that the police should make clear that anyone caught will have the book thrown at them. He added that on the section of Old Lane close to Jubilee House, he had seen cars on the wrong side of the road overtaking at around 60 to 70 mph. This is not an odd occasion, but a regular occurrence. John Hook also said that there is regular speeding close to Old Lane Post Office. There was a suggestion that the police should get a camera and ticket everyone. Adam Cooper also pointed out that a friend lives on Noster Hill, and recalled an incident in which they and a couple of toddlers had to step back from the road to avoid speeding traffic. Pauline Johnson said that there is speeding on Cross Flatts Grove. Christine Thornton noted that it is fairly clear that speeding occurs all over Beeston. Richard Bell noted that a minority of people will abuse the road and called for an intelligence led approach. However, he feared that the police would set up a camera, and issue tickets to motorists driving at 30-40 miles per hour, but that the idiots will get away with it. PCSO Rooks noted that the police had confiscated a car from a group of boy racers twice. He noted that the car had been hired by the group. When the police had returned the car to the hire company, they were able to hire this again.

7.2 Mary Dinsdale noted that there has been a spate of burglaries. There have been a number of break ins on the Southleigh Estate but one person had been taken into custody. Mary Dinsdale asked whether he has been sentenced. She believed that there were two people together working on the burglaries, and noted that this had been distressing for residents. It was noted that the burglars stole large TVs and other possessions.

8. Report of Subgroup dealing with a Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston. Greg Turton noted that he had met with Ian Mackay, the Leeds City Council Officer responsible for Neighbourhood Planning on 9th January. They considered various aspects of the application form for a grant for which the group will be able to apply as soon as the designation of the neighbourhood area is confirmed. The form asks for details of what the community is interested in from a neighbourhood plan. Greg Turton also noted that the proposed Neighbourhood area contains 6529 properties and has a population of 16322. Greg Turton and Ian Mackay had identified precise sums of £2940 to apply for. A number of areas had been identified where it is impossible to identify precise sums. It appears, however, as though we will apply for the maximum possible grant of £7000. The other grant to which the group is entitled is for consultancy aid. We would receive advice about writing a neighbourhood plan and a constitution for the Neighbourhood Forum. The maximum for this grant is £9000. Greg Turton noted that up until now, all the work carried out had been undertaken by ourselves, wither in the subgroup or in the committee. Greg Turton said that areas for which precise costs could not be worked out include the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, collecting evidence of community engagement, publicity and promotion and consultation with the community. Greg Turton noted that there had been some discussion about the organisation of a drop in session, which would take place after the leaflet had been circulated to residents of the Neighbourhood Area. There may be more than one such drop in session. Ian Mackay may be able to help. One idea was to take photographs of the local area labelled the good, the bad and the ugly. Residents could be able to attach 'post it' notes with comments. There might also be a stall manned by representatives of Planning Aid. Greg Turton added that it is hoped to involve schools, and also families with children. There could be a fun area for children.

Greg Turton then addressed the possible involvement of a Planning Student. He noted that the group setting up a neighbourhood plan for Boston Spa has had the assistance of a student whom Greg Turton wrongly presumed lived in the area. The student had, in fact been recruited by Ian Mackay. Greg Turton noted that Ian Mackay had offered us the opportunity to have the services of a student who would be able to help us with various tasks; for example the writing of the neighbourhood plan, and helping us with the process of consultation. He added that the committee is keen to take up this offer. It was noted that Ian Mackay had identified a student who would assist both ourselves and the group drawing up a neighbourhood plan in Barwick with Scholes. It was noted that Ian Mackay is keen to give the student experience of working in two different areas. It is intended that 70 hours of the placement would be devoted to Neighbourhood Planning.

Greg Turton noted that the leaflet to be circulated to local residents had been drafted by Richard Bell, although the amount of text may have to be reduced. The questionnaire, which will accompany the leaflet and which will seek the views of local residents and give them the opportunity to volunteer had been looked at. Greg Turton also thanked Mark Parry for finalising the logo. Greg Turton noted that the Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum has a logo which incorporates a number of familiar landmarks of Holbeck. Greg Turton said that we have adopted a different approach with a symbol which looks vaguely like the House of Commons Portcullis, denoting the grid of streets in the centre of Beeston, with a house. Greg Turton said that there may be T shirts and other items bearing the logo. There is a strapline 'Lets make Beeston Better'. The plan will be known as the Beeston Plan. The designated area had been put out to consultation. The consultation process finished on 27th December. Greg Turton pointed out that Ian Mackay has had to write a report, which has gone to the planning department. It is hoped that the designated area will be approved within the next week or two, after which we will be able to apply for a grant. Greg Turton had been informed by Locality that we will get a response to our application within 20 days, so that we will hopefully hear about our grant application in March. John Hodgson said that he had voted against making an application for

the designation of the Area, but only because we had been asked to exclude the Elland Road Framework Area from the designated area. He noted that many years ago, the Forum had drawn up a matrix of spare land in the area. He noted that the Parklees building had recently been demolished. He noted that the newspapers had led us to believe that the site is being looked at with a view to being sold off. He hoped that the Neighbourhood Forum will be influential in relation to that issue. Robert Winfield noted that following a decision of the Forum, he had written to Leeds City Council about the Parklees site. He noted that it is his personal opinion, which he understood to be supported by the Councillors, that some of the Parklees land might be used to provide a more satisfactory access route to Beeston Village Community Centre than the current access route. Richard Bell expressed fears that the future of Beeston Village Community Centre is not assured. Christine Thornton hoped that the neighbourhood plan, when finalised would be influential in relation to these issues.

9. Robert Winfield referred to the unsatisfactory state of the paths leading to Beeston Village Community Centre, notably uneven surfaces and the deposits of mud. Councillor David Congreve said that mud on the paths should be swept. He noted that someone had raised the issue with him, and he had contacted senior officers. Christine Thornton felt that the paths should be swept on a regular basis. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that he write to Leeds City Council about these issues.

10. Report of Committee meeting held on 16th January 2014. Christine Thornton noted that there had been discussion about the guest speakers appearing at the Forum later in the year. She noted that Tom Smith, who deals with cleansing issues for Leeds City Council would appear in March whilst speakers dealing with the White Rose Centre would appear in May. The meeting had also considered a number of items of correspondence and discussed the planning application by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak site on Barkly Road. It was noted that not everyone in the area had received the letter sent by ward councillors about the application. Robert Winfield suggested that the Forum member who had made a specific complaint about not having received such a letter at the last Forum meeting should make himself known. He did so, whereupon Councillor Adam Ogilvie agreed to speak to him at the conclusion of the meeting. Adam Ogilvie stressed that the letter should have been sent to all households in the area of the site and he undertook to check the addresses to which the letter had been sent. It was noted that a lot of people in the area of the site did not receive the letter. Christine Thornton pointed out that Councillors will have administrative support, which would actually deal with the logistics of sending out the letter. John Hodgson asked whether residents living adjacent to the site should have been kept informed about the planning application. He noted that the signs giving details of the planning application were taken down and had to be re-erected and that this had led to a delay in considering the planning application.

11. Correspondence-

11.1 Robert Winfield noted that he had a protracted exchange of correspondence involving Chris Lees, the Headteacher of Beeston Primary School, and a local resident, Mr Paul Raper who had raised a number of concerns in relation to building works on and around the school site. Mr Raper's latest e-mail said that he finds the explanation given by Mr Lees hard to accept. Mr Raper added that whilst he is sympathetic to the need for Beeston School to be upgraded, communication with surrounding residents was limited. He added that he has work colleagues who live in the houses below the school and no leaflets were posted, nor were there any signs erected on the boundary of the school, which Mr Raper understood is the normal procedure in relation to planning matters. He added that the public are now left with a closed footpath and given a temporary unfloodlit, uneven track. The path is, he added, not just for the able-bodied of us, it has to service the small and the elderly too. He added that the parking which Mr Lees talks about can be dealt with through endorsing parking penalties within a fixed area or the use of a permit system.

11.2 Robert Winfield noted that Richard Bell had raised the issue of a willow tree close to the Co-op toppling over and falling into the street. It was felt that anyone who had been hit by the willow tree would probably have been killed. Robert Winfield noted that he had been asked to raise the issue with Leeds City Council, and had received a detailed reply which he would not read in full. He would instead leave copies of the relevant correspondence on the top table so that if any forum members wished to read the correspondence after the meeting, they could do so. He pointed out that Leeds City Council has a statutory duty to ensure that all trees under its control are maintained in such a way that they do not pose unreasonable risks to people or property. Leeds City Council said that this duty of care is taken extremely seriously. Parks and Countryside Forestry section have developed a tree risk management system to ensure that developing tree hazards are identified early and reduced in a timely fashion. Tree risks are identified by qualified arboriculturalists using an internationally recognised assessment system and a risk category is assigned. Robert Winfield noted that the categories range from 1 (emergency) where work is to be completed within 24 hours to 4 (non hazard) where no hazard is identified following an inspection and the situation is reviewed periodically to determine whether any hazards have developed since the previous inspection. Richard Bell noted that he was present when the willow tree referred to had fallen down and had written to Leeds City Council to ask about the state of other trees in the area. He added that this letter had clearly motivated Leeds City Council to take remedial action as a number of adjacent trees had been cut down. Roy Casserley noted that he had reported two trees which were obscuring light columns, and nothing has been done despite endless calls to Leeds City Council. This was like hitting a brick wall. Christine Thornton noted that trees covering lights can cause a risk due to obscured vision, but this is not the same issue as trees or branches posing a direct physical danger to people or property. She noted that he had reported a loose branch in Cross Flatts Park to Leeds City Council, which inspected the branch within 24 hours and dealt with the matter within 48 hours. Adam Cooper wondered what the correct procedure for reporting hedges is. He noted that the hedge at 80 Grovehall Drive had grown across a path and in front of a road sign. Adam Ogilvie noted that he walks past this area regularly and noted that Environmental Services are aware of the issue. Adam Cooper added that there is a huge mud patch in the area which is dangerous in the current wet weather. Roy Casserley suggested giving Tom Smith a rough ride over these issues.

11.3 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Jayde Feeney, a Support Officer for Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation Ltd explaining that she is currently researching any events or news taking place in Middleton, Belle Isle, Hunslet ,Holbeck, Beeston and Rothwell in 2014. She would like more information about the Beeston Forum before they advertise it for us.

11.4 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Adrian Patton, a Senior Support Worker , to make us aware of a mental health centre which he described as Beeston (but which is in fact on Tunstall Road and therefore outside Beeston), and to see whether we are aware of anywhere which could let them use a piano for an hour a week.

11.5 Christine Thornton had taken a phone call explaining that De Puy is organising a function at 3p,m on 27th February at St Mary's Parish Centre to enable them to speak to the community about developments relating to their site. Anyone is welcome to attend.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 John Hodgson asked whether there has been any information about the Aspiring Communities Planning Application for the Ice Pak site on Barkly Road. It was good to see a large number of local people making representations about the application, but he had received no details about any decisions. Councillor David Congreve noted that council officers were waiting for further information from the applicant before preparing a report, which is expected to be fairly imminent . David Congreve added that he had read an article on the South Leeds Life website saying that someone had criticised him for leaving the last meeting of the Forum before its conclusion. David Congreve pointed out that there is often one councillor present at each Forum meeting and often all three councillors are present. He noted that he had a good reason to leave the Forum meeting on the last occasion. He noted that he had submitted an objection to the Aspiring Communities planning application and said that he might wish to leave the meeting on this occasion, rather than be drawn into any substantial discussion about the application with supporters and opponents. John Hodgson noted that our Member of Parliament and each of the three councillors have submitted an objection, and that the majority of local people responding to the application were opposed . However, he recognised that there had been a similar situation with the Park and Ride proposal; however, unlike the Park and Ride Scheme, the present planning application will not make any money for the council. Christine Thornton wondered whether a date had been fixed for a plans panel meeting. David Congreve said that he cannot give a date but that this is likely to be sooner , not later . Robert Winfield noted that he has objected to the application both on behalf of the Forum and in a personal capacity . David Congreve noted that a report , with a recommendation is submitted to the relevant plans panel by council officers . The planning application will be determined by the plans panel. He suspected that not all supporters and objectors would receive details of the plans panel meeting as there had been so many representations. He added that under the procedure to be followed , the applicant is given three minutes and objectors together have three minutes. Panel members may ask questions of both sides in order to clarify what has been said , and can also raise questions with council officers. The plans panel members then discuss the application and make a decision. David Congreve noted that the application has already been the subject of a pre planning hearing several months ago. The procedure is different, in that the applicant and objectors each have 15 minutes. Christine Thornton felt that further discussion of the planning application before it is determined would be pointless.

12.2 Robert Winfield noted that Asda had been granted outline planning permission for a store on Old Lane and Tesco had been refused planning permission for a store on Old Lane, with the land earmarked for the Tesco store remaining an eyesore. John Hodgson recalled that Asda had promised that if they were granted planning permission, they would expedite the building of the store, but there had been no movement on this issue. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that we write to Tesco and Asda asking what the current position is .