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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 7th July 2016

Agenda

- 1. Acting Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum meeting held on 2nd June 2016**
- 4. Guest Speaker- Bobby Viridi, Leeds City Council Highways Department**
- 5. Police Report**
- 6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan**
- 7. Report of the Committee meetings held on 19th May 2016 and 16th June 2016**
- 8. Correspondence**
- 9. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 2nd June 2016

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair) , Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, M. Broadbent, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs S. Burton, Mr. S. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, D. Craven, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. C. Hendrick Ward , Mr. K. Hewson, Mr. J. Hook ,Miss . P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. J. Lee, MBE , D. McGuigan, Mrs. M. Munro, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, Rev. L. Pearson , Mr. G. Turton, Mr. B. Weatherall , Mr. R.J.W. Winfield , Mr. N. Zaman

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and noted that it is pleasant to see sunshine after a number of cloudy days

2. There were no apologies for absence

3. Guest Speakers. It was noted that the bulk of the meeting would be given over to a debate on the UK's membership of the European Union, in view of the Referendum taking place on 23rd June. Christine Thornton introduced the guest speakers, Richard Corbett MEP , who would speak in favour of the UK's continued membership of the European Union , and Carl Chambers, who would speak in favour of the UK leaving the European Union. Christine Thornton said that each speaker would make initial remarks of up to five minutes duration (to be timed with a device which she had brought to the meeting) . Following questions from the floor and responses from the speakers, the two speakers would sum up for a maximum of ten minutes each. As a result of the toss of a coin, it was determined that Richard Corbett would speak first.

3.1 Richard Corbett noted that he is one of the Members of the European Parliament for the Yorkshire and Humber Region. He noted that he had once been described as the most boring politician you can safely vote for. He explained why we should have a European Union, and why we should be a part of it. He said that there are three different reasons for this; principled and idealistic, pragmatic and practical and selfish.

Dealing with the first of these headings, Richard Corbett explained why we started, after World War II , the process leading to the EU.

This was a peace project. Every generation since the Roman Empire had slaughtered themselves on the battle field. We needed to find a different way. Thus, we needed to find common interests . He noted that there are still rows, but these are across a negotiating table or a debating chamber . It was precious to create an area of stability, and he noted that the EU had won the Nobel Peace Prize

Dealing with his second point, Richard Corbett noted that we are a group of neighbouring countries who are highly interdependent. We cannot solve many things alone and we must work together. There are often rows when countries fail to agree but where countries agree, they do things which they cannot do alone

With regard to the third point, Richard Corbett noted that Britain is a trading nation which pays its way by trading and exporting. The UK sells more to Holland than to the Commonwealth and more to Ireland than to China. . This is vital for jobs and prosperity. 44% of the UK's exports are to the EU . Having a seat at the table as well as access to the European Market means that we can fight for our interests and defend our corner.

Richard Corbett argued that the three different reasons which he had outlined all point in the same direction. We are better off remaining in the EU even though it is not perfect. However, Britain is not perfect . If he is fed up with the British Government, he would not advocate that Yorkshire left the UK . He said that many of the arguments in favour of leaving the EU exaggerate or invent things which are wrong with it. For example, it had been claimed that the EU costs a fortune . However, the EU actually accounts for 2% of public spending , most of which we get back and which in any case is small compared with the economic effects of this spending. He said that £1 spent on the EU brings £10 worth of benefits.

3.2 Carl Chambers said that he would also focus on three areas . He noted that he had not taken a personal decision about Britain's membership of the EU until fairly recently. He recalled David Cameron's Bloomberg speech in 2013. he was delighted when David Cameron argued that there is a need to reform the EU, including curbing the European Court of Justice, bringing powers back from Brussels to the UK, and dealing with the EU's uncompetitiveness. He argued that we need reforms and a new treaty, and that the best place for the UK is in a reformed EU . However, Carl Chambers added that unlike David Cameron, he does not believe that the UK should be in an unreformed EU . Carl Chambers referred to David Cameron's negotiations and pointed out that we are the second largest economy in the EU as well as the second largest net contributor. The threat to leave the EU had achieved nothing. There was no new treaty and no renegotiation of powers. There had been some talk of subsidiarity with a mechanism which had been described by William Hague as ineffective. He had argued that if the EU had ordered the slaughter of the first born, the process would not succeed in reversing the decision. He described democracy as government by the people for the people of the people. He also added that we need a common culture, heritage, legal system and values, otherwise democracy does not work. In the EU , these values are not shared. Thus, Carl Chambers argued, the EU needs a different way of doing things .

Carl Chambers described EU institutions as unaccountable, unelectable and unrepresentative. Only the Commission, which consists of 28 members, can initiate laws . He noted that national electorates had rejected many of the EU Commissioners . He rejected the view that the EU has been beneficial and instead sought to argue that it had been a spectacular failure. We have failed to penetrate the EU market with exports. The 27 non EU nations of Europe had grown exports to the EU faster than the UK . The EU's share of world GDP had shrunk from 30% to 17%. He noted that the UK is a service economy , but that two thirds of our exports of services are outside the EU. The EU had been set up to benefit German manufacturing and French agriculture, not us. . We do not have a vote for what the EU is , nor for what it is about to come .

Carl Chambers argued that the EU is changing. It is becoming centralised in Brussels. There has been one way traffic over the past forty years towards an ever closer union and a federal structure . He referred to what he described as the risks of staying in the EU; the Eurozone crisis, the Greek debt crisis . In addition, Italy and France have slow growth and cannot afford to pay their debts. When the Greek crisis was taking place, the UK had to find £850 million to help with a bailout. He predicted that the UK would be asked to help again

3.3 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Stuart Casserley said that when the EU had been set up there was a requirement for most countries to drop below 3% inflation. Many countries had higher inflation , but miraculously, inflation had fallen below 3% so that a treaty could be signed . Richard Corbett , said that, in fact, inflation is not a criterion for EU membership , but inflation was possibly a requirement for joining the Euro. He noted that there are various criteria required for a common currency, including inflation (which all countries joining the Euro had met. Another criterion was the level of the deficit. Richard Corbett noted that Greece had been allowed to join the Euro with a larger deficit than should have been permitted , but as the UK is not part of the Euro, this is not our problem and we have a legally enshrined exemption from having to participate in any bailout loans . Carl Chambers said that Greece had fiddled their books and that many people had been complicit in this. Additionally, France had breached deficit limits ; they were given time to meet these- they failed and were then given more time. The Euro is fundamentally unsound . In Greece, those dealing with the Euro crisis had ridden roughshod over their democratic system.

3.4 Steve Francis asked Carl Chambers to justify his claim that the UK is the second largest net contributor to the EU . Carl Chambers said that in terms of absolute amounts the UK has consistently been the second largest net contributor to the EU and had consistently been so. He noted that £9.8 billion, the current figure, is a large amount. . He added that the UK rebate is under negotiation and would be under attack if we were to remain in the EU . It could be bargained away. He recalled that a couple of years ago, David Cameron had said that we would not pay the £1.7 billion which had been requested for additional budget contributions but we had ended up paying. Richard Corbett said that the UK is the seventh biggest net contributor per capita, and also addressed the issue of what we use the money for. One of the uses is agriculture. This used to be most of the EU budget but now accounts for around 30% of it. . He noted that every industrialised country subsidises agriculture for security of supply and the environment . The nations of the EU had agreed to have a common system . If there was no such common system , the systems established by individual nations would compete. The French would have massive subsidies and the other nations would seek to catch up. The second item of spending for the EU budget is research , particularly medical scientific and technological. It makes sense for EU nations to pool resources in order to give rise to economies of scale , eliminate duplication and give better value for money. The EU budget also provides help for less prosperous regions , which we

must help to catch up . he noted that Yorkshire had done well from this aspect of the EU budget. He repeated that 2% of public spending is at EU level with the remaining 98% at national level

3.5 Rosemary Casserley asked how much money would be free for us to use if we were to leave the EU , or would we have to support agriculture. Carl Chambers said that there is no such thing as EU money ; it is taken from taxpayers . he added that funding for agricultural subsidies is taken from taxpayers, a cut is taken for administration and the money then comes back to us. He noted that the UK has been subsidising agriculture since the Corn Laws. However, the UK does badly out of EU agricultural subsidies as we are helping farmers in France, Greece and Spain . He added that regional development funds are good, but the fact that the EU's fund is on a supranational basis leads to discrepancies. He noted that Yorkshire receives £100 million per year, or 1% of GDP. Carl Chambers argued that we should decide where the money is spent. He also noted that nations must match EU funding on a one for one basis. The money should be retained by the UK government to spend as it thinks fit . He noted that Tower Hamlets, a poor London Borough is not part of the Regional Development Fund zone as it is a part of Greater London, which is considered to be a wealthy area. Richard Corbett noted that all countries pay in in proportion to their wealth . He noted that in addition to contributions from governments, the EU also receives money from fines imposed on multinational companies for violations of competition law. Thus, not all money from the EU comes from the taxpayer. The money is used largely where spending money jointly can save money at a national level. He emphasised yet again that this is less than 2% of public spending , which he said is small compared with the economic effects of being in the largest single market in the world. He noted that every £1 of EU spending brings benefits to the value of nearly £10 so that the economic effects are more important

3.6 Mark Parry noted that he has e mailed Linda McAvan MEP and noted that this is just like contacting Hilary Benn . Carl Chambers said that democracy needs a commonality of people. He said that the EU is not democratic due to how its institutions interact . They are unrepresentative. The UK has 14% of the EU's population but less than 10% of its MEPs. Other nations in the EU have, on average twice as many MEPs per capita as the UK . This is unrepresentative. Laws are initiated by the Commission which is unelected. Such laws require the consent from the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers but neither of these bodies can initiate legislation. The Commission is an Executive not a civil service. Richard Corbett rejected the points made by Carl Chambers about democracy and pointed out that on that basis, Switzerland and India (which has 24 languages) would not be democracies. He added that if we act jointly at European level, this must be as democratic , accountable and transparent as possible . The Commission can only propose legislation, not decide it. The EU can only legislate on subjects where all countries have agreed under treaty to give it the right to do so . Even then, any proposal by the Commission must get through the Council of Ministers , which has one minister from each country and the European Parliament. The idea that bureaucrats impose legislation is not true. Votes in the Council of Ministers are weighted according to a country's population. 65% of the total votes available are required to adopt anything. Nothing can be slipped through by a narrow majority; broad agreement is required . Richard Corbett noted that we do not elect civil servants and judges; the same principle applies at EU level. People who take decisions (Ministers and MEPs) are accountable and elected.

3.7 Richard Bell acknowledged that he had taken little interest in the EU but in view of the forthcoming referendum had undertaken some research . He is interested in the representation in the EU. He knew who our councillors are , and noted that two of them were at the meeting . He knows that our MP is Hilary Benn and he knows how to contact him . On the other hand MEPs cannot propose European Laws ; the only people who can do so are not elected . EU Commissioners take their positions by appointment . He noted that the UK's representative on the Commission is Lord Hill. Richard Bell noted that he does not know him, nor what he stands for. Only the Commission can propose legislation. We have no influence . Carl Chambers said that this is the fundamental flaw in the EU . MEPs cannot propose legislation . He wondered whether anyone can name their MEPs . He added that Harriet Harman was recently shown pictures of the seven EU Presidents and was unable to identify them . This is a fundamental problem. We need a connection between the people and their representatives . In the UK representatives might be subject to criticism, but this is preferable to the EU . The EU is responsible for more laws and the European Court of Justice is taking a greater role which is a fundamental flaw. Richard Bell said that he was concerned that Lord Hill has, in the past worked for Bell Pottinger, a lobbying firm . Richard Corbett pointed out that the Commission can only propose, not adopt. Under the EU Treaty the European Parliament has the right to request the Commission to draft legislation. The Council of Ministers has the same rights . However, in the UK we do not elect a government, just a Parliament. The majority in Parliament sustains a government, but ministers don't have to have been elected . Moreover, Lord Hill had been appointed as a European Commissioner by the Prime Minister . The PM also nominates ministers in the UK government. Lord Hill was indeed a minister prior to his appointment as an EU Commissioner . This shows that ministers can serve in the House of Lords, without having been elected to anything- no different from commissioners . He added that EU Commissioners from other EU member states are appointed by their countries Prime Ministers. Moreover, each Commissioner requires a vote of confidence from the European Parliament which invites each candidate for appointment to the Commission for a three hour public question and answer session. Commissioners can only hold office if they win this vote of confidence in the European Parliament. Additionally, the Parliament can sack the commission. Richard Bell however, felt that this simply reinforces what he described as the Club. He also noted that each Commissioner is required to take an oath to the EU , and they thus become a part of the EU. Richard Corbett said that the job of defending the national interest belongs to the minister . The Commission only proposes in the general EU interest but does not decide . Ministers and MEPs decide. He added that we should not do things at European level if we can do things at national level. This is called the principle of subsidiarity and is written into the treaty . There are common rules for the common market to protect consumers, workers, the environment and fair competition, but the EU has little or nothing to do with how we organise healthcare, housing , education, pensions, social security, family law or indeed most key issues in British politics

3.8 Bill Birch recalled that in 1975, he had voted for the UK to remain a member of the European Economic Community, and he said that that is what it should be. However, he said that the EU is now an ever closer union; a United States of Europe. He noted that in the USA , the rich states bail out the poor. In the EU, however, Germany is bankrupting Greece and was threatening to bankrupt Italy. He asked the speakers how they could see the countries involved forming a proper union. This will fail and fall apart unless we are dragged into it. Richard Corbett noted that the UK joined the EEC in 1973. At that time, we left EFTA , a free trade area as we wanted more than that . Bill Birch said that he voted for a trading group . Richard Corbett noted that following the UK leaving EFTA to join the EEC on January

1st 1973, there was a referendum in 1975. Bill Birch noted that there was no referendum when the UK actually joined the EEC, just a referendum effectively to ratify the decision. Richard Corbett noted that the UK joined the EEC as a result of a decision of the House of Commons. The EEC was much more about economics even then, but he noted that the aim of ever closer union was in the preamble to the treaties even then. He added that it is the aim to create an ever closer union amongst the peoples of Europe in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity (the principle that decisions should not be taken at EU level if the problem can be adequately dealt with at national level). The EU's motto is 'Unity with Diversity'. He noted that Greece had huge debts and needed to be bailed out by the IMF and the Eurozone, but he noted that the UK is not in the Eurozone. However, the UK wants the Eurozone to work as it is not in the UK's best interests for it to fail. The UK is not liable to meet the costs of Eurozone bailouts; this has been enshrined in EU law. Carl Chambers noted that the problem for the UK's relationship with the EU is that most people still see it as a trading organisation. The public feel that politicians misled them in the 1970s. He recalls seeing TV pictures of Edward Heath saying that there would be no transfer of sovereignty; this was totally untrue. Now, European politicians are a lot more open and this has been a major source of friction between the UK and the EU. The people thought that we are members of the EU on one basis whilst politicians and civil servants believe that we are in the EU on another basis. Many people believe that the EU should be a trading organisation and should foster trade between countries. If we listen to Jean Claude Juncker and Angela Merkel, it is clear that we are heading towards a federal structure. The Eurozone crisis drives that. We need transfers of money from richer to poorer countries for the Euro to work. He does not see that happening. Richard Corbett said that the rule book is the treaties. We need all the nations to agree any change to the treaties and a transfer of powers can only occur if all countries agree. There is no legal obligation on the UK to join further integration. Carl Chambers said that the UK has undertaken not to stand in the way if the Eurozone moves towards ever closer union. This had been agreed by David Cameron in his EU negotiations. This would create a two tier Europe with the Eurozone which will control European Monetary Union, and will vote in the interests of the Eurozone. He noted that there are nine EU nations which are not in the Euro, but five of these are committed to joining. The Eurozone looks after its own interests and the UK is outside. He argued that the UK would be presented with a choice between joining the Eurozone or leaving the EU.

3.9 John Cunningham said that people are not bothered about democracy and noted that the House of Lords is not elected. They have however stopped certain laws from going through and he noted that he has sometimes agreed with the House of Lords when they have done that. Carl Chambers acknowledged that there are weaknesses in the UK system but noted that the House of Lords cannot stop legislation permanently. However, we do not correct a bad system by imposing another one. Richard Corbett noted that the final decision on most things is with the elected House of Commons and the Lords don't make the final decision, just as EU Commissioners do not take the final decision. Richard Corbett noted that there are actually nine countries in the EU but outside the Euro but added that this is the more flexible Europe for which the UK has argued. The UK is outside the Euro and the Schengen agreement. However, the UK has always had a common travel area with Ireland.

3.10 Colin Hendrick Ward said that if we leave the EU, there would be less bureaucracy. Richard Corbett said that bureaucrats only propose not decide. He added that before the recent cutbacks in local authority funding, the European Commission had fewer employees than Leeds City Council. He argued that the question of what happens if we leave the EU is bigger. What happens to our economy and to us as a trading nation. He noted that the leave campaign is divided. Half of them say that we should leave the EU but should retain access to the Single Market, negotiating a free trade deal to sell products tariff free. However, Richard Corbett noted that it will be difficult, having left the EU and slammed the door on it to negotiate full access to the Single Market. We must agree to common rules but will have no say in the rules. He added that Norway is outside the EU. They have tariff free access for most goods but must agree to EU rules. He added that the Norwegians are reduced to lobbying the UK as they cannot directly represent their interests. Richard Corbett added that the other half of the leave campaign says that the UK should leave the single market and go global, then have tariff barriers into the EU. However, most cars in the UK are sold on the continent. Tariff barriers harm our competitiveness and reduce our market share. Three million jobs depend on trade with Europe. If we are going global we will need to do it even better with the rest of the world. We will need to negotiate new trade agreements to replace those which we negotiated through the EU. Trade agreements are normally negotiated as the EU which gives us more clout. For example, the South Korea EU trade agreement came into effect four years ago; the UK has doubled its exports to South Korea in that time. Koreans are most interested in the German market. If the UK asks for a trade deal with South Korea, the Koreans would ask what is in it for them. Carl Chambers said that the figure of 75% for the proportion of EU regulations which apply to Norway comes from the Norwegian government, some of whose members would prefer Norway to join the EU. However, EU membership had been rejected by 72% of Norwegian people in a referendum. The 75% figure is not widely accepted. One website puts the actual figure for the proportion of EU regulations applying in Norway at between 10% to 21%. He added that Iceland adopts 10% of Norwegian laws but does not get hung up about EU regulation. He added that the EU is a taker of regulations not a maker, as trade is moving onto a global basis. He referred to the World Trade Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, and Codex, the organisation which regulates world food standards. When the UK is dealing with regulations, it is represented by the EU. It is one of 28 EU nations. Norway, by contrast, has its own seat so that it is influencing global decisions. The European Economic Area gives Norway the right to declare that EU regulations are not applicable. The EU wanted to impose Health and Safety regulations for oilfields. Norway rejected this. Carl Chambers added that we frequently hear about the massive influence exerted by the EU in relation to trade deals. However, the EU has negotiated deals with 55 countries in 40 years. This sounds a lot but this includes nations such as the Faroe Islands and the Seychelles. The EU achieved its first trade deal with a major economy, South Korea, four years ago. There is no agreement with any of the world's top ten nations as it is difficult to get agreement amongst EU nations. The negotiations of the TTIP trade agreement with North America have been slowed because of issues with the French audio visual industry. There are also issues delaying a trade agreement with India. The total GDP of the 55 nations with which the EU has trade agreements is £8 trillion. In contrast, Korea has trade deals with nations with a combined GDP of £40.5 trillion. China has deals with nations with a combined GDP of 58 trillion US dollars. Thus, the EU has been a manifest failure in terms of its ability to negotiate trade agreements. The largest trading bloc has been less successful in negotiating trade deals than nations such as Chile, Singapore and Switzerland. He also noted that Australia has a trade deal with Japan.

3.11 A member of the audience noted that the UK is in Europe. He asked which regulations can we drop and what effect would it have on

trade . Carl Chambers said that he does not foresee a bonfire of regulations. It was however argued that just such a bonfire is one of the key arguments of the leave campaign. Carl Chambers said that the government can decide about the future level of regulations. He noted that the European Large Combustion Directive had forced the closure of coal fired power stations. This had been driven from outside and had not been in our best interests. The supply and demand margins for power had fallen from 20% to 5% , although he acknowledged that part of the problem had been caused by the fact that UK governments had not had a coherent energy policy . The National Grid has been taking about the rationing of power as we have not replaced the power generated by coal fired power stations . We have not put together a policy to deal with this. Carl Chambers also referred to the Agency Directive, which mainly affects small businesses . he noted that employees taking maternity leave does not present a problem for large corporate businesses. However, small businesses with, say, five or six employees do have a problem. The agency directive requires temporary workers who have been employed for twelve weeks to be given the rights of permanent employees. This has a detrimental effect on small businesses and often leads to temporary workers being replaced by other temporary workers just before the twelve week timescale is up . By a two to one majority, businesses believe that regulations are a hindrance. Carl Chambers noted that the CBI represents 190000 businesses , but there area total of 5.5 million businesses in this country. By a two to one majority, businesses which do not export to the EU wish to leave the EU. Open Europe estimates that we could save 0.7% of GDP or £12 billion per annum . Carl Chambers felt that this may be too optimistic . Richard Corbett noted that the questioner is from an economic research institution. He said that normally, economic forecasters are all over the place but just about all economists say that the UK leaving the EU would represent a high risk to the UK economy. He added that some leave campaigners have argued that this is a conspiracy, but he noted that Trade Unions and the IMF are on the same side. He also noted that the London School of Economics, Oxford Economics, the World Bank , the IMF, the OECD , the Bank of England and the Treasury all foresee a big downside to the UK economy should the UK leave the EU . Carl Chambers, however, said that they are not in fact saying that there would be a downturn. The audience member who asked the original question acknowledged that it is rare for social scientists to agree on anything but almost all say that there will be a big economic hit. Richard Corbett noted that most EU rules are common rules for the common market. These protect people and cut costs if we get it right. For example, trade marks only need to be registered once, not 28 times. Formerly, a company exporting from the UK to Italy needed 22 forms to show at borders. Now businesses need just one document; a Single Administrative Document or SAD. Richard Corbett added that this is not sad for businesses. Other common rules relate to E numbers on jam jars. This can be a matter of life and death for people with allergies. This can be a win win situation when we get it right. Richard Corbett acknowledged that not all EU legislation is right, but he noted that not all legislation is right in Britain either. The EU is not just about economics. He referred to the Blood Directive. When we give blood, there is a common system for classifying and packaging blood. This means that blood can be used throughout Europe. When the London bombings took place, blood was flown in from Europe. This therefore saved lives. Carl Chambers said that forecasters are not saying that there will be a downturn from now. When PWC reported on behalf of the CBI, they were reported as predicting job losses but that is not actually what the report says. The economy would still grow compared with now under either scenario . Although one million jobs would not be created by 2030, a significant number of jobs would still be created . Carl Chambers noted that the IMF had failed to predict the global recession the year before the credit crunch, and Treasury forecasts are frequently wrong. He also noted that two thirds of academic economists believed that the UK should join the Euro. Two years ago, a panel of economists looked at the question posed by HM The Queen; ‘Why did no one predict the crash?’ The member of the audience said that the panel were mixing up short term forecasts with long term forecasts and ended up with something which is completely inaccurate . he added that people who move money look at reports and take decisions . He said that in the short term over next year the uncertainty of Brexit will lead to industry losing confidence and investment . This may hit the economy by 1% or 2% but it will hit the economy. He added that the pound had slid upon the publication of an opinion poll showing that those who favour leaving the EU are ahead.

3.12 A member o the audience asked whether it makes sense for the European Parliament to meet in both Strasbourg and Brussels. Richard Corbett noted that the European Parliament actually agrees that it is sensible for it to meet in only one place, but this is a matter for the nations of the EU in the treaty. He noted that under the Edinburgh Treaty of 1992, the Parliament meets in Strasbourg for one week per month. The French argue that Strasbourg is important symbolically as it has alternated between France and Germany in a number of wars. Richard Corbett felt that this fact does not justify the costs involved

3.13 Ken Burton noted that Radio 4 had interviewed people who were in favour of remaining in, and leaving the EU. He noted that the interviewee who supported leaving the EU works for a steelworks. He was mined to apply for two contracts in France, but was told that there is no need to apply as he would not get the contracts. This showed that the EU is not a level playing field . Richard Corbett said that the EU agrees to common rules in order to get a level playing field. The person involved can take this to court. He added that for most international agreements , some countries apply them whilst others don’t . But in the EU agreements are part of European Law. If they are not applied, those failing to apply them can be taken to court. This is a cumbersome procedure , but it is there. He recalled that when the sale of British beef was banned in many overseas countries because of the BSE crisis, the ban was removed as British Beef became safe again. However, the French tried to avoid lifting the ban. The UK took France to the EU court , and the French were compelled to back down. If we were outside the EU we would no longer be able to do that . The USA and much of the world still bans British beef ; there is nothing we can do about this. Carl Chambers noted that there are always ways to break rules, although the European Court of Justice provides a Forum to deal with this. Regulations often play to national interests. He noted that the Single Market is diluted in many ways , for example requiring the registration of professionals.

3.14 There was then a summing up by each speaker. Carl Chambers noted that in his view, there are three key reasons to leave the European Union. First, Democracy. The EU is not democratic. Would institutions correct democratic imbalances? We do not have that . he added that the UK is underrepresented in the European Parliament . When UK MEPs get together to oppose measures which are against our national interest, we lose 80% of the time. In the European Council, on the 70 occasions when we have voted against measures contrary to our national interest, we have lost on all 70 occasions. The UK often wins when the matter is less important. Thus, a democratic deficit exists. The second reason for leaving the EU relates to costs and benefits . If you cede democracy and pool sovereignty , there might be a benefit . We pay £350 million to the EU , and get funding coming back but we make a net contribution of £9.8 billion per annum. We could do with a fraction of that amount in the NHS . Westminster would decide spending not the EU. In

addition the top 30 regulations cost British Business £600 million per week. Open Europe has argued that if we were to scrap these regulations, we could save 0.7% of GDP. Carl Chambers expressed the view that this is optimistic . Only 6 per cent of businesses export to the EU . 8.7% of our GDP relates to trade with the EU but EU regulations affect all business. Most businesses which do not export to the EU wish to leave the EU . With regard to FTSE 350 companies; in December 61% expressed the view that the EU benefits them. This figure had now declined to 37%. With regard to the benefits of trade, countries in the single market trade twice as much. It is also true that exports have grown , but of the 27 European countries outside the EU exports have grown more quickly. Additionally exports by the USA and Canada have grown by 115% and exports by Australia have grown by 190%. We have been unsuccessful in breaking into these markets. The UK exports more outside the EU than within it Countries such as Switzerland and Korea have been more successful in setting up trade agreements than the EU. The USAs GDP has risen by 13% whilst the EUs GDP has risen by 3%. The EU now has around 17 to 18% of world GDP. The share of UK exports to the EU is shrinking and our future lies with exporting elsewhere. Carl Chambers added that voting to stay is not voting to stay in the same institution. The Euro has given rise to problems so we need to do things to stabilise it. The Eurozone needs to harmonise banking and social laws. We would have little influence outside the Eurozone. We would be marginalized, outvoted and on the periphery. We will face a choice between joining the Eurozone and leaving the EU , either now, or in four years time. It is not us, leaving the EU, but the EU leaving us. Our paths are wider apart. The Greek crisis had been postponed . Crises in France and Italy are looming. If you want the UK to remain part of an organisation morphing into a United States of Europe , vote Remain . If you see a self governing confident democracy making laws and trading, vote to leave. Outside the EU, we can be great friends and neighbours with countries currently in the EU.

3.15 Richard Corbett said that the EU is not just about markets and economics but about other aspects of co-operation such as police and security. Europe coordinates 40000 cross border police investigations. Criminals such as drug traffickers and terrorists act internationally. The EU is also influential in terms of scientific research. British Universities are good at bidding for EU funds, and Universities UK is campaigning for remain. The Erasmus scheme is successful. The EU also has a vital role to play in terms of environmental policy. Pollution does not stop at borders so adjoining nations must work together. It is pointless for the UK to act on climate change if no one else does so. The EU can also exert leverage on the rest of the world. The EU led in the Paris climate change talks. Richard Corbett also referred to the Blood Directive. The EU had also acted on the issue of migrating birds. It is pointless to protect birds in one country if they are liable to be shot down in the next country. With regard to immigration, the leave campaign has argued that this cannot be controlled as we are in the EU, so that too many people are coming in. However, most migrants entering Britain come from outside the EU which is entirely a matter for British rules and nothing to do with the EU . There is a right of free movement within the EU. This works both ways. There are as many British people living in the EU as EU people living in Britain. We can enforce our immigration rules better due to the EU. The border controls are located at Calais, not Dover. France allows this although it is controversial in France; for example, the Mayor of Calais opposes this arrangement. There is also the Dublin rule under which asylum seekers must apply for asylum in the first EU country in which they arrive . This had been waived by Germany for Syrian refugees but Britain hasn't waived it . Finally European police co operation means that people coming in to the UK can be checked for criminal records , fingerprints and forged and stolen passports. So we control our borders better because of our membership of the EU. The UK is not underrepresented. In the Council of Ministers, the minister has a vote proportionate to the UKs population. We are on the winning side 90% of the time. We have the benefit of the world's largest market in terms of trade deals. We need to look at the content of trade deals. Richard Corbett noted that in the trade deal between China and Switzerland, , the Chinese can access the Swiss market totally, but the Swiss are unable to sell Swiss watches, an iconic product, in China. If the Eurozone does more together, this does not mean a hardcore and a periphery. Many things are at the level of all 28 countries such as the Single Market, agriculture and research. Richard Corbett noted that the UK used to share a currency with Ireland. Economic research institutes typically have different views , but on these issues, almost all of them converge. 80% of businesses and most Trade Unions believe that the UK should remain in the EU. He noted that Trade Unions and businesses do not agree every day! . He does not wish to dwell on the negatives but there are risks . On the positive side , we have a structure in which the UK and neighbouring countries can work together. Other parts of the world could do with this . If we walk out, we would not see a single problem which would be helped

4. The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 12th May 2016 were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting

5. Robert Winfield drew the attention of the meeting to the text beneath the agenda, which, he noted, had been written in anticipation of there being no business other than the debate about the EU Referendum. He noted that Councillor Judith Blake, the Leader of Leeds City council, who had originally accepted an invitation to be our guest speaker at our next meeting on 7th July , will no longer be in a position to attend. She has now been invited to attend the meeting on 6th October but had not yet replied. However, Bobby Viridi of the Leeds City Council Highways Department will be attending the meeting to discuss the proposed extension of the Residents Car Parking scheme around Elland Road

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that a meeting of the Inner South Leeds Community Committee will take place at Hugh Gaitskell School on Wednesday 15th June. Sandwiches would be served from 5p.m with the formal meeting starting at 5.30p.m. The meeting would deal with Highways Issues

6.2 Steve Francis noted that there would be a further debate about Britain's membership of the EU, involving Rt. Hon Hilary Benn MP at Arts At Trinity in Leeds City Centre on the evening of Friday 10th June

6.3 Rosemary Casserley noted that the Beeston Festival will take place on Saturday 4th June. Christine Thornton pointed out that over 100 stalls have been booked. There will be lots of food. The event officially starts at 12p.m but some stallholders will arrive as early as 9.30am . Councillor Angela Gabriel pointed out that Hannah Begum, the Leeds Childrens Mayor, who is ten years of age and lives in Beeston but attends Hunslet Moor School will open the event