

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

Secretary: Mr Robert Winfield, 7 Allenby Gardens, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 5RW. Tel 0113 271 6985

E mail robert.winfield1@ntlworld.com Forum Website- www.beestonforum.btck.co.uk

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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 7th March 2013

Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speakers**
 - I) Stewart Robinson, International Fun Fairs**
 - II) Insp. Paul Akerman, West Yorkshire Police**
 - III) Mark Burns-Williamson, Police and Crime Commissioner, West Yorkshire Police**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 7th February 2013.**
- 5. Correspondence**
- 6. Committee Report**
- 7. Possible Co-options to the Committee**
- 8.. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 7th February 2013.

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. J. Adamson, Mr. R. Almond, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mrs D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, J. Cardiss, Mr J. Cardiss, R. Casserley, S. Casserley, Mrs M. Cooke, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. I. Daniels, Mrs. K. Dickens, Mr. S. Dundale, Councillor A. Gabriel, Sgt. S. Greaves (West Yorkshire Police) Mr. M. Griffin, M. Hobson, Mr. J. Hodgson, Mr. J. Hook, Mr. R. Hunter, PCSO K. Johnson (West Yorkshire Police) Miss P. Johnson, Mrs. D. Kenny, Mr. A. Kirby, C. Kirk, Mr R. Kitson, Mrs. M. Kitson, Mr. G. Leathley, Mrs. J. Leathley, Mr. Y. Mahmood, Mrs. M. Mason, A. McGrath, Mr. J. Morton, Miss. E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. A. Pointon, K. Riley, Mr. F. Swift, I.R. Turner, Mr. D. Turpin, Mr.G. Turton, Mr. M. White and Mr.R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton thanked those present for their attendance and noted that the numbers attending the meeting exceed the numbers of copies of minutes and agendas which had been produced. Accordingly, she asked the members present to share minutes and agendas.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Birch, John Fenton, Kathleen Fenton and Mark Parry.

3. Guest Speaker-

3.1 Christine Thornton introduced the guest speaker, Gill Clark, who would speak about the revamping of Harry Booth House. Gill Clark thanked the Forum for its invitation, and said that she would be talking about the new future for Harry Booth House. It is currently being refurbished and converted into a community based integrated intermediate care unit which will open in April, and will be run jointly by the NHS, the Leeds Community Health Care Trust and Leeds City Council. The aim is to speed the recovery of elderly people so they can come out of hospital as soon as they do not need acute medical care. The unit would be staffed by nurses and care staff. Older people can come into the unit from the community, hospital and Accident and Emergency. People coming into the centre can recover quickly, be looked after and be rehabilitated, then go home. Gill Clark said that a lot of money was being spent on the conversion. £1.2 million was being spent to ensure that the unit can provide the highest standards of infection control. She noted that elderly people often have nasty bugs.

Gill Clark added that this will be a pilot unit; the first in the City. She explained that the centre will be looked at closely for its impact. The aim of the new centre is to avoid hospital stays. If people do not want residential care, they are set to one side, reabled and sent

home to live as they wish rather than in residential care. She added that not everyone will go home, but the majority will.

She noted that there had been some consultation about the name which has been selected which is South Leeds Independence Centre. The name reflects what the centre will do. There are 40 beds of which 30 are nursing and 10 are care. The building is located on Atha Crescent. The aim is to try and avoid making elderly people more ill. Gill Clark contrasted the situation with beds in Old People's Homes. Many people get used to the beds and stay, which is sometimes not the best solution.

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst the issues raised were the age groups catered for and the nature of the care offered, the removal of the name of Harry Booth from the building, whether there would be an open day for the new centre

4. The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 1st November 2012 were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting. In connection with the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd January 2013, Christine Thornton drew attention to the note which had been added to the minutes by Robert Winfield. She noted that in view of the sensitivity of the discussion which had taken place about the plans by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak site on Barkly Road, Robert Winfield had taken the unusual step of allowing Christine Thornton, as the Chairman of the Forum to see the minutes in advance of the meeting. As a result of the ensuing discussion, Christine Thornton had suggested the note, which makes reference to the amicable discussions which had taken place after the meeting between representatives of Aspiring Communities and Forum members who had criticised their plans. The minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matter Arising- Plans by Aspiring Communities for the Former Ice Pak Factory. Councillor David Congreve confirmed that no planning application has been received, and noted that planning officers want answers to various questions. John Hodgson suggested changing the agenda so that the future use of the Ice Pak building can be discussed next. Christine Thornton said that we should go through the agenda as published and members of the Forum would then be welcome to raise the issue under Any Other Business. John Hodgson noted that the issue of parking is mentioned in the minutes and that Zeb Ahmed had said the Aspiring Communities has the power to stop people parking on the streets. He noted that it had been stated at various times that our councillors and the planning department had been in contact with Aspiring Communities. He did not disagree with the comment about parking, but he does not understand how Aspiring Communities has the power to impose fines. He added that we would do a disservice to the people of Beeston if they do not have the chance to get this issue off their chest at the first opportunity. He asked whether the councillors and the planning department have been in discussions about parking.

Councillor David Congreve clarified the planning issues relating to the proposals, and explained the procedures involved in pre planning presentations. He stressed that he does not wish to become involved in a detailed discussion about this planning application but he could raise concerns without prejudice. He noted that he chairs one of the Plans Panels, although not the panel which would consider this application. He pointed out, however, that if the Chair of the Panel considering this application is unable to attend, he might be asked to chair the meeting as a substitute. He added that objections to planning applications must be on planning grounds, including design, the fit with the street scene in the locality, and traffic. He added that an assertion that 'We do not want this here' is not a valid basis on which to object to a planning application.

Councillor Angela Gabriel said that 2 or 3 people from Aspiring Communities came to see her at a surgery in May 2012. They had bought the site and wished to develop this. They envisaged a sports centre and multi faith area. The representatives then came to see Adam Ogilvie the week after. They were advised not to speak to David Congreve because of his involvement in planning. They were advised to come to the Beeston Forum and speak to the community. Angela Gabriel said that she had e mails saying that the councillors had told Aspiring Communities to keep quiet. She said that this is not the case. She had received an invitation to the Aspiring Communities meeting on 9th January. She promptly explained that this is also the date of the Area Committee meeting. She noted that the councillors could not force Aspiring Communities to change the date of their meeting.

Richard Bell noted that he had found an Excel spreadsheet detailing a grant of £500 from the Leeds City Council Inner South Leeds Area Committee to Aspiring Communities. There is no detail as to what the grant is for. Angela Gabriel said that she had never seen published accounts. She undertook to find out what the grant was for. David Congreve noted that there is another community group called Aspire, which has no connection with Aspiring Communities despite the similarity of names. David Congreve noted from the minutes of the last Forum meeting that Bill Birch had said that the councillors had advised Aspiring Communities. David Congreve said that the Councillors had not given advice to anyone and would not do so.

A member of the audience noted that he had attended the meeting on 9th January and thanked the councillors for their attendance. It was inferred that Aspiring Communities had been working closely with the Leeds City Council planning department and councillors, and that they had been told not to approach the community straight away. It was noted that Aspiring Communities had wanted to take photographs of the audience at the meeting on 9th January. They said that the Council had asked them to do that. Angela Gabriel disputed this version of events..

A member of the audience said that most of the people attending the meeting were in their 40s and early 50s. They found it intimidating to see the police taking notes and the community group taking photographs. She asked why there was such a large police presence. Sgt. Sam Greaves acknowledged that he was struggling to answer this question and this is the first he had known about the police presence. PCSO Kirsty Johnson said that the police were there as they were interested in what was being said at the meeting as it is an issue relating to the local community which they police. It was noted that a number of things had been said at the meeting which the

Councillors have now advised are not correct. Angela Gabriel said that when she next meets Aspiring Communities she will raise this with them.

John Hodgson added that he found both the meetings (on 3rd January and 9th January) intimidating. He noted that a group was willing to give advice to opponents of a mosque, but he felt that the Forum should not want to be branded as being opposed to a mosque. However he said that the sight of three policemen with large black books intimidates a lot of people. He felt that Hilary Benn should be involved, and that we should find out why there was a large police presence at the meeting on 9th January. Do they, for instance know about a group which is seeking to infiltrate us? Christine Thornton said that having three police officers at the meeting was over the top.

Mark Griffin noted that John Hodgson had mentioned the issue of Parking. He recalled that at the Aspiring Communities meeting, it was stated that there would be no car parking outside the premises as the owners of parked cars would be fined by the Highways Department. It was stated that Aspiring Communities would pay £3500 per annum for parking to be monitored; however Mark Griffin had checked with the Planning and Highways Departments, neither of whom knew anything about this arrangement.

Robert Winfield noted that there had been a number of instances in which members of the community have felt that their freedom of speech in commenting on the proposals by Aspiring Communities has been inhibited. He said that it is vital that the Forum asserts the right of those attending the meeting of freedom of speech in connection with all issues relating to the Community. He referred to the Forum meeting the previous month and noted that Aspiring Communities clearly appreciated the value of local residents saying what they think about their proposals. He described the action of PCSO Jonathan Rooks, in threatening to walk out of the meeting because he took exception to a number of remarks which had been made at the meeting as a disgrace. He added that local residents who had expressed concerns about the plans by Aspiring Communities were in no sense racist. The fact that members of the Forum who had criticised the plans by Aspiring Communities were engaged in amicable discussions with Zeb Ahmed and his associates after the meeting clearly demonstrated that they are not racist.

Rosemary Casserley asked whether the issue involved with the plans by Aspiring Communities, is that of change of use, rather than plans to build a mosque. She noted that we have been waiting for a considerable time for the determination of planning applications by local supermarkets and asked why the plans by Aspiring Communities are taking precedence over this. Christine Thornton said that this is not the case, and added that she has no involvement in the planning process other than as a local resident. Angela Gabriel pointed out that there is not much change of use involved in the plans by Aspiring Communities, and that this is not a change of use in planning terms. She noted that Ice Pak prepared hot food, when they used the premises as a factory. Thus, this is not a change of use in planning terms. A member of the audience asked whether Ice Pak prepared dead bodies! Christine Thornton said that they dealt with animal bodies not human bodies. David Congreve understood that there had been an element of food preparation at the Ice Pak factory, and noted that Aspiring Communities plan to retain the large industrial kitchen on the site. John Hodgson said that if we do not get the information, the plans are a Trojan horse. He noted that the plans are supposed to include a sports centre and with regard to traffic, he noted that there had been no attempt to look at traffic in the area as a whole. Arthur Kirby noted that plans for weddings and funerals were not mentioned at the Forum meeting. He said that that is wrong. Everything was supposed to be discussed at the Forum meeting, but certain issues were not discussed. Why? **When these minutes were considered for approval at the following meeting, John Hodgson said that Robert Winfield had done a good job in drafting the minutes but noted that the person who had started the debate about weddings, funerals and dead bodies was David Congreve. He added that there was no mention of the discussion about hot kitchens and noted that many people who know about these matters said that there was no hot food at the Ice Pak building.**

Greg Turton noted that when Zeb Ahmed spoke at the Forum, he said there were no proposals, but the proposals would be shaped by the Community. He said that it is in the best interests of Aspiring Communities to take the concerns of the community on board. Christine Thornton said that she hopes that Aspiring Communities listens to us all and incorporates the views of residents into their planning application. However until an application has been submitted, it is like knitting fog. She added that we are all aware of the concerns of local residents.

6. Police Report- Sam Greaves pointed out that he is a new Sergeant on the Holbeck Neighbourhood Policing Team. He noted that there are concerns in relation to Anti Social Behaviour and the use of motorcycles in Cross Flatts Park, and the use of motorcycles in Gipsy Lane and Middleton Woods. He noted that the Police's off road biker had returned, whilst another member of staff with these duties is in rehabilitation. He added that the treatment by the police of off road motorcycles is different from most types of Anti Social Behaviour. He noted that offenders are given a Section 59 warning. Two such warnings can result in the seizure of a bike. They would then have to pay to recover the bike and this often costs too much!. In Beeston, there had been twelve such warnings since the start of January; the highest in the City. He urged anyone with information about illegal or nuisance bikes to telephone the police. The police would then direct Lee, John or the new rider appropriately. He added that bikes are one of the priorities in Middleton Woods. He noted that council riders are involved in combating nuisance bikes and that riders are out tonight near Middleton Woods. Riders also continue to work in Cross Flatts Park, which is regularly patrolled.

Sam Greaves referred to the conduct of PCSO Rooks at the previous Forum meeting. He acknowledged that his conduct had been unprofessional and apologised on behalf of West Yorkshire Police. Doris Brooke pointed out that following the Forum meeting PCSO Rooks had gone into the kitchen and apologised. Christine Thornton pointed out that the conduct of PCSO Rooks had been discussed by the Forum Committee which had decided not to make a formal complaint because he was apologetic after the meeting.

Sam Greaves then referred to the Love Beeston, Clean Beeston campaign throughout this year. The police are prosecuting for flytipping, and will work with the community. Greg Turton said that there are a number of parades of takeaways. The bins in the area are inadequate and there is litter all over the place. He wondered whether there is any way in which owners can be made to be responsible

for the area in front of their shop. Sam Greaves said that he does not know about this, and this is a matter for the Council. Councillor Adam Ogilvie said that he had recently had a meeting with Tom Smith of the Inner South Leeds Area Committee, who felt that shop owners needed to take some responsibility. He added that 30 extra litter bins funded by the Area Committee had been provided in the ward, and had been located in prominent places.

Sam Greaves said that the three Neighbourhood Policing Teams had dedicated time to dealing with prostitution and were pursuing this. A member of the audience asked whether the police horses dealing with Anti Social Behaviour are still available. Sam Greaves said that these are a force resource and need to be shared out accordingly. Holbeck NPT can bid for the horses, which have recently been working in Bradford, when they are needed. We must be realistic about their availability. Sam Greaves was asked whether West Yorkshire Police were getting rid of horses due to costs. He confirmed that they are not. However, the mounted section of the force has been regionalised with Humberside due to costs. There is still the capability, but we must bid for it.

Fred Swift pointed out that the 20 mph speed limit on the Cardinal Estate is being ignored. Sam Greaves said that the police had gone to the area last week after Angela Gabriel had drawn their attention to the problem. They had found no speeders that day.

7. Elland Road Park and Ride Scheme- Christine Thornton noted that it had been the intention of the committee that the present meeting would have a detailed discussion about the proposed Elland Road Park and Ride Scheme. She acknowledged that this discussion had been rendered impossible, by the lengthy discussion which had just taken place about the plans for the Ice Pak factory

8. Correspondence

8.1 Robert Winfield had received a letter from Tom Riordan, the Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, responding to our letter expressing our concerns about the Development Department's handling of the planning applications by Asda and Tesco for stores on Old Lane. Mr Riordan said that he is glad that we appreciate that in this case, where the council have applications from rival operators on adjacent sites, to be clear in the officer advice given to panel members in order to avoid the risk of a judicial review by either party. He added that as the retail impact of the supermarkets is an important consideration, the Council has employed an independent consultant, Colliers, to advise on the retail impact of the proposals. He added that Colliers role is purely to advise the Council so it would not be appropriate for them to attend a Forum meeting. Mr Riordan added that neither of the officers dealing with the plans were available to attend the meeting on 28th June, so a quick briefing note was prepared. He added that it is acknowledged that there was a factual error about the Tesco site, but this was in a briefing note and not part of the formal decision making process. Tom Riordan asked us to accept the Council's apologies for this, but he does not feel that it should undermine our confidence in officers to write professional reports. He added that Leeds City Council acknowledges that there is no building on the Tesco site, and the point was made clear in the officer report to members regarding the application and in the presentation to panel. Tom Riordan added that he regrets that both Asda and Tesco told our meeting that the Development Department compares unfavourably with other departments around the country. He added that their comments are disappointing. Tom Riordan added that he is aware of the Community support for the applications. He noted that Tesco submitted their highway assessment and cumulative assessment just before Christmas and a further submission from Asda is pending. Tom Riordan added that Leeds City Council hopes to conclude the process as quickly as possible and report back to panel for final decisions to be made about both applications.

8.2 Christine Thornton had received a telephone call from Stewart Robinson of International Fun Fairs, the organiser of the Valentine Fair at Elland Road. Christine Thornton recalled that in the past, Stewart Robinson had attended the February meeting of the Forum on a regular basis so that Forum members could air their concerns. However, in recent years such concerns have diminished. Stewart Robinson would be attending the March meeting in order to hear the views of members about the fair. He has also agreed to donate £500 to the Forum, and invited Christine Thornton to the opening ceremony. It was noted that Councillors Adam Ogilvie and Angela Gabriel had reminded International Fun Fairs that Beeston gets nothing from the Fair.

9. Deferral of Agenda Items- Christine Thornton said that in view of the pressures of time, the agenda items dealing with the reports of Committee meetings and the co-option of Committee members would be deferred. However, she noted that we are always seeking new committee members.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Jeremy Morton pointed out that South Leeds Life would be organising a public meeting about the future of Stank Hall Barn at Beeston Village Community Centre at 7p.m on Thursday 28th February.

10.2 A member of the audience noted that just before Christmas, gypsies moved onto the walkway near the Golden Lion Pub at the bottom of Beeston Road and blocked the road. Angela Gabriel noted that this was a police issue; the police moved them on. It was, however noted that Leeds City Council had put a toilet on the site for use by the gypsies, who should not have been there.

10.3. Robert Winfield described the guest speakers who will appear at the Forum during the remainder of the year.

March- Stewart Robinson, International Fun Fairs, Insp. Paul Akerman, West Yorkshire Police and Mark Burns-Williamson, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire

April- Dennis Holmes Leeds City Council, Adult Social Care.

May- no guest speaker arranged so far

June- no guest speaker arranged so far

July- Councillor /Keith Wakefield, Leader, Leeds City Council

August, Gerald Jennings, Land Securities plc and Tim Flanagan who will be dealing with plans for the White Rose Shopping Centre

September- Rt.Hon. Hilary Benn MP.

Robert Winfield pointed out that the committee felt that we should try to keep the October and November slots free so that we would be able to deal with any issues which might unpredictably arise in the meantime.