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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting – 8th January 2015 Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker- Rt.Hon. Hilary Benn MP
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 4th November 2014
5. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 5th December 2013
6. Police Report
7. Report of the subgroup dealing with a Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston
- 8.. Report of the Committee meetings held on Thursday 20th November 2014 and Thursday 18th December 2014
9. Correspondence
10. Possible Co-options to the Committee
11. Guest Speakers for 2015
12. Any Other Business

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

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. J. Adamson, R. Ashworth, Mrs. T. Beal, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mrs. J. Birch, Mr. D. Blackburn, Mrs. J. Blackburn, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mrs. T. Carr, Mrs. M. Cook, H. Cooper, W. Cooper, H. Cowell, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mrs. M. Dinsdale, B. Draper, K. Draper, Mrs. E. Emmett, G. Fitzpatrick, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, A. Grimwood, Mr. I Grimwood, L. Grimwood, M. Grimwood, Mr. K. Hewson, Mrs. P. Heron, Mrs. M. Hobson, Mr. J. Hook, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. D. Kenny, Mrs D. Kenny, M. Kirk, T. Kirk, Mr. E. Leathem, Mr. P.Lewis, Mrs L. Lewis, Mrs. E. McClellan, Mrs. M. McClellan, A.McGrath, Mr. M. Milner, Mrs. V. Milner, Mr. J. Morton, M. Munro, Mrs. A. Newton, Miss E. Newton, Mrs. F. Orr, Rev. L. Pearson, Mr. J. Peckham, Mr. B. Ragan, Mrs. B. Ragan, S. Rushworth, D. Senior, Mr. S. Sturman, Mr. G. Wainwright, Mr. C. Ward, Mrs. C. Whitehead, R. Williams and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield (*Secretary's Note . It is plain that a significant number of individuals who attended the meeting did not sign the attendance sheet and consequently are not recorded in the minutes as having attended the meeting. I would be pleased to accept an alteration to the minutes involving the addition of any such individuals to the list of those attending*)

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present, on what she described as a damp, dark, autumn evening. She apologised for the fact that no refreshments would be served at the end of the meeting, as John Fenton and Doris Brooke, who undertake this task, were both unwell
2. Apologies for absence were received from Doris Brooke, John Fenton, Councillor Angela Gabriel, Arthur Kirby and Councillor Adam Ogilvie. Additionally, Will Sparling, a student at Leeds Beckett University who takes a close interest in neighbourhood planning had expected to attend the meeting, but presented apologies as he is unwell **When the minutes of this meeting were submitted for consideration to the following meeting of the Forum, the name of Greg Turton was added to those presenting apologies**
3. Guest Speakers- Christine Thornton introduced the first guest speaker, Sue Watson of Leeds United FC.
 - 3.1 Sue Watson explained that she started at Leeds United for the second time in July 2014, a week before the club's first fixture; against Dundee United FC. She noted that she has been working in safety management since 1992. She noted that her first spell at Leeds United FC had been between 1992 and 2000. she is now back at the club after working all over the country in safety officer roles. In 2012, she worked at the Olympic Park. She noted that this had been an amazing experience in which 8.1 million people had come through the gates. She said that it is wonderful to be back in Leeds. She explained that within three days of returning to the Club she was informed by the WYP that Leeds United FC would be taking over the responsibility for traffic management. WYP would no longer be responsible for

coning, traffic management and road closures. The first match for which Leeds United FC was responsible for traffic management took place five days later. Since then, the club have had six games to get it right. Sue Watson offered her apologies to residents of the Heath Estate who felt they had been inconvenienced by the closures; she noted that it is necessary to strike a happy balance between enabling residents to have access to their homes and enabling crowds to get away from the ground safely.

She highlighted that for the past 20 years, whenever there has been a really big crowd of 40000 or no public transport, the road had to be closed to enable people to get away safely. Sue Watson explained that civilians do not have the same powers as the police; however, the club has the authority of Leeds City Council to undertake traffic management of Elland Road, and as such staffs undertaking road traffic management must physically put a barrier in place to close the road, as they cannot stand in the road as WYP officers would do.

Sue Watson noted that at 4.30p.m (assuming a 3p.m kick off) traffic along Elland Road goes to one way- all traffic travels towards the Ring Road.

As the whistle for the end of the match goes, and the first surge of people leave the ground, the whole road is closed except for Heath Road. The idea behind this is to clear people off the road as they would not stick to pavements. The road is then reopened on a rolling basis. Sue Watson noted that the road closure period had been reduced to 17 minutes; she added that she thinks LUFC have got the procedures right now. In addition WYP have supported the closures with staff, to ensure drivers do not refuse to stop. CCTV cameras are also in operation along Elland Road, recording any contraventions.

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Topics covered include the repercussions for traffic in the Cross Flatts Area, the legal implications of the new arrangements for traffic management , on street parking in the area around Elland Road Football Ground, the potential for supporters attending the ground to be encouraged to use buses or walk , the availability of car parking spaces at the ground, rubbish bins and litter in the vicinity of the ground

4. Christine Thornton introduced the second guest speaker, Pat McGeever, Chief Executive of Health for All (Leeds)

4.1 Pat McGeever noted that Health for All (Leeds) has been in existence for 23 years and runs projects and services offering support for families, individuals and children. It also promotes healthy lifestyles. It operates from five centres. She noted that Health for All (Leeds) holds the lease for Beeston Village Community Centre , and was, in the past, instrumental in the foundation of the Beeston Village Community Centre. When the building which is now Beeston Village Community Centre ceased to function as a library , Health for All (Leeds) was approached by local councillors about the conversion of the building into a community centre. The building has operated as such for around five years. Leeds City Council had decided that the building was not fit for purpose as a library due to problems with access, the lack of suitable car parking facilities and the darkness of the surrounding area.

Pat McGeever explained that we had now reached the stage where Health for All (Leeds) has been advised by an architect that the building has a limited life of 1 to 2 years, as the roof, doors and windows will require replacement. Moreover, the entrance to the building is not fit for purpose. In view of this situation, Health for All (Leeds) has been developing a proposal to secure funding for the redevelopment of the building. An application is proposed to the Reaching Communities fund of the National Lottery, which offers capital funding of up to £500000, which approximates to the likely cost of a replacement community centre. Health for All (Leeds) approached councillors eight months ago, and secured £5000 from Leeds City Council to engage the services of an architect to carry out a feasibility study. It is now intended to carry out a consultation about a number of tentative ideas. A number of options have been put forward as follows:-

i) refurbishment of the existing building, which has two disadvantages; the high cost, and the fact that access to the building is extremely poor.

ii) obtain some land from the Parklees site to assist with the redevelopment of the building. This option has been rejected by Leeds City Council which intends to use the Parklees site for housing.

iii) demolish the building and replace it with a new one storey building. This has a problem as the building is on a small footprint.

iv) the current preferred option would involve the replacement of the current building by a two storey building with car parking. The entrance to the new building would be close to the fire exit for the existing building. There would be space for a community creche, a cafe and meeting rooms. There would be a disabled access lift to the upper storey which would incorporate another hall. Thus, there would be two large halls similar to the existing hall.

Pat McGeever noted that when submitting a bid. Health for All (Leeds) is required to inform the lottery about the present use of the building. She added that even though the current building is not the poshest building and it does not have the best access or facilities it is one of the best used buildings operated by Health for All (Leeds) in south Leeds. Three hundred people use the building per week. It is used by groups on weekdays as well as Saturday mornings and Saturday afternoons, whilst it is used by a church group on Sundays. It is also in use on most evenings. Thus, there is a strong case for the redevelopment of the building. Pat McGeever said that is the intention of Health for All (Leeds) to work with users and local residents in relation to this matter. She asked forum members whether they believe that it is a good idea, and noted that there are a number of hoops to jump through in relation to the lottery application.

Stage One of the application involves the Lottery saying that the proposal is a good idea. Pat McGeever said that her soundings indicate that it is possible they will say that it is, in principle but there are still two other stages to go through after Stage One.

Stage Two involves the drawing up of more detailed plans including a model. There is a need to pay professional fees

Stage three would involve the funding being granted

A member of the audience asked whether the new community centre would be used by teenagers. Pat McGeever noted that the present community centre is used by a youth group which meets on an evening, and another youth group meeting on a Saturday afternoon. The centre is also used by disabled peoples groups and the centre is also used by parents from schools. Pat McGeever noted that a number of people wished to start sewing groups. Health for All invited the groups in and helped them to secure a grant. She also noted that Health for All operates five or six minibuses. It might be possible to organise visits to similar centres with similar facilities, such as a community café – if and when the time comes for beneficiaries and users to be involved in designing and shaping the new centre.

4.2 The meeting then opened up to comments and questions from the floor. Doris Kenny wondered whether it would be harder to repair than to rebuild the building. She also wondered whether it would be possible to beg for land. Pat McGeever said that if that approach would work, she would do it. There is support from the councillors but this is out of our hands. She noted that the land is in the hands of the Asset Management Department of Leeds City Council, and that there will be significant cuts to Leeds City Council's budget, which in turn place Leeds City Council under an obligation to maximise its income. Pat McGeever recalled that many people doubted the ability of local residents to turn the present Beeston Village Community Centre into a community centre, but the building has been functioning as such for five years. She also noted that the cut off point for lottery funding is £500000, which is not very much. She had been advised by the architect that the likely cost of the proposed building is £650000. This gives rise to a need to contact the lottery to explain the situation. There is no guarantee that they will accommodate our needs, but why not try?

4.3 A member of the audience asked how much additional traffic would be brought into the area by any new community centre, and where would visitors to the centre park. Pat McGeever pointed out that users of the present building typically use the car park for the doctor's surgery. With regard to the new building, she noted that any building which is not connected to a car park will not secure planning permission. It is envisaged that the upper floor of the new building would overhang a car park, although Pat McGeever acknowledged that there could be a dispute in relation to trees near by. Christine Thornton noted that Hugh Gaitskell School actually felled a tree in the area. Pat McGeever predicted that the plans for the new community centre would ease traffic problems in the area, but noted that this would be addressed by the planning process. She said that any increase in the use of the centre would be helped by a dedicated car parking but the new building would enable users of the centre such as old people to be dropped off in an accessible minibus; something which is not currently possible. She added that Beeston Village Green is protected and that houses in the area might be affected. A member of the audience asked about access roads to the centre. Pat McGeever noted that the architect had asked about the ownership of the land and was told that it is owned by Leeds City Council.

4.4 A member of the audience asked whether any plans have been drawn up. Pat McGeever said that the ideas are at an early stage and as such no plans have been drawn up. She noted that Health for All (Leeds) did not know whether it would be possible to save the centre before the feasibility study had been carried out. A member of the audience noted that it had been great for Pat McGeever and Health for All to come to the Forum at an early stage. He noted that he has many happy memories of the building as a library. It was noted that the next stage of the process is for Health for All (Leeds) to come forward with a proposal, ask members of the public what they think, see about the effects of the proposal and ask interested parties whether they support it. A member of the audience noted that he likes the ideas which had been put forward. He would want a community centre on the present site, and understands the process of bidding for funding.

4.5 A member of the audience asked whether the car park would be used by parents dropping their children off at the school, and also whether it would cut off the light to the school. Pat McGeever acknowledged that the school must be consulted about the proposals. She suspects that the school would welcome some changes. She noted that there is currently a strange situation in which the centre is attached to Hugh Gaitskell School. The electricity supply for the centre originates from the school and comes through the canopy joining the two buildings.

4.6 A member of the audience noted that the paths leading to the centre are a problem and that these are rarely cleansed. Pat McGeever said that Health for All (Leeds) is used to working with what they have, and recalled the experience of the old Tenants Hall building which had become run down. It has been rebuilt into a new centre which looks good. She noted that the building is next to an old peoples' centre and she had to ensure that the new building did not look out to it. In connection with the possible refurbishment of Beeston Village Community Centre, Pat McGeever said that professional help is required to look at issues such as access. Similarly, the issue of lighting needs to be examined.

4.7 Richard Bell noted that there is a large audience at the current meeting, largely as a response to current developments, notably the former Ice Pak site which is now owned by Aspiring Communities. He noted that Aspiring Communities has established a Steering Committee in relation to the development. He noted that some members of the Steering Committee are employees of Health for All (Leeds). In the light of this, he asked whether Health for All (Leeds) supports the proposals by Aspiring Communities. Pat McGeever said that she is unaware that any employee of Health for All (Leeds) is acting in this capacity. If they are doing this, it is in their own time. Richard Bell noted that the details are published on the website of Aspiring Communities and that the individuals concerned are identified as Health for All (Leeds) employees. Pat McGeever said that she is aware of the proposals, but that it is not in the brief of Health for All (Leeds) to put people on boards relating to other developments. Any employee serving on such a committee is doing so in a personal capacity. Pat agreed to investigate the situation but reiterated that no HFA employee is on such a board representing the charity. A member of the audience noted that Health for All (Leeds) will be applying for a revamp of Beeston Village Community Centre, whilst the plans by Aspiring Communities involve a community centre at their premises. Pat McGeever said that she would not want the name of Health for All (Leeds) attached to an initiative which they have nothing to do with. She noted that Health for All (Leeds) had been asked to develop the building which is now known as Beeston Village Community Centre and had done this. However, the building is now in some disrepair, so that it is logical to seek funding for refurbishment.

4.8 Noor Zaman said that he would not wish to lose the community centre, but this would be lost in around one year's time if nothing is

done. He pledged his support for the efforts by Health for All (Leeds) to refurbish the building.

4.9 Robert Winfield noted that the last meeting of the Beeston Forum Committee had discussed the poor state of lighting and footpaths in the vicinity of Beeston Village Community Centre, as a result of which a decision was taken that Robert Winfield would write to Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, to express our concerns. He read Tom Riordan's reply. Tom Riordan said that he understood that officers from the Council's Asset Management team recently met with Health for All (Leeds) and the local ward members to discuss proposals for the former Parklees site and Beeston Village Community Centre. He noted that the meeting included a detailed inspection of the surrounding area including access and pathways. He added that Health for All (Leeds) have exciting plans to redevelop the building including extending the building to create a second storey. It was noted that there had been discussions about improving the access to the centre from both the east and west. The plans are at an early stage but they incorporate an access road using part of the Parklees site and parking immediately adjacent to the building. Officers are amenable to part of the Parklees site being used for that purpose and are also investigating how to improve access from St. Anthony's Drive as an additional measure. Tom Riordan added that officers are not aware of any confusion about land ownership in the immediate vicinity. Most of the surrounding land is owned by Leeds City Council, although the operational area of the school is currently being transferred to the school's trust. He concluded by saying that Neil Charlesworth, Principal Asset Management Officer would be pleased to be of assistance.

4.10 Pat McGeever noted that one important question is whether Health for All(Leeds) would be able to retain the building. She noted that the government has introduced a scheme under which there are a large number of places for two year olds. This scheme includes funding for nurseries and child care schemes. Because of this, there has been some interest in using the centre as a nursery. However, she added that councillors had wanted to retain the building as a community centre and will support the proposals put forward by Health for All (Leeds).

4.11 Robert Winfield asked what is the likely timescale for the redevelopment, considering that the Forum would need to find alternative premises for meetings during the period of the redevelopment. Pat McGeever said that she could not be sure of this, noting that she had just sent proposals to the architect. It is unlikely that Health for All would receive funding for any redevelopment for one year. She hoped that the first stage of the process of applying for funding would be concluded by Christmas; the next stage of the application process would take four months. A member of the audience asked whether Leeds City Council would pay for the demolition of the building. Pat McGeever said that Leeds City Council would be unlikely to have the money for this. She has however asked for a contribution towards the planning, considering the lottery's £500000 limit on funding. She noted that it is hoped to use the foundations which are still solid as the basis for any new building.

4.12 A member of the audience noted that Cross Flatts Recreation Club has offered to host meetings of the Forum should it be impossible to use Beeston Village Community Centre. Robert Winfield noted that this had briefly been mentioned at a meeting of the Forum Committee. He noted however that any alternative venue would need to be carefully chosen. He noted that the relocation of Forum meetings to St Andrew's Church following the closure of Wesley Street Methodist Church had led to substantial falls in the attendance at meetings.

4.13 Adam Cooper noted that there would be a need to remove hazardous materials from the building. Pat McGeever said that she gets the sense that Leeds City Council would help with this.

4.14 The meeting agreed to a proposal from Bill Birch that the meeting votes on the proposals put forward. The meeting supported with one vote against, a resolution supporting the action of Health for All (Leeds) in taking their proposals to the second stage. The voter who opposed the resolution said that he favours the demolition of Beeston Village Community Centre, and the use of other existing buildings, rather than a replacement building for the centre.

4.15 Pat McGeever took the opportunity to introduce Fiona Orr who will work as a Neighbourhood Improvement Officer for Beston and Holbeck. Fiona Orr noted that she is a colleague of Pat McGeever in Health for All (Leeds); she is based at the LCC One Stop Shop premises on Dewsbury Road, having started in this role two weeks ago. This is her first evening meeting.

4.16 Robert Winfield noted that a meeting of the Beeston Village Community Centre Users Committee would be taking place at 4.30p.m on Monday 10th November. Pat McGeever noted that HFA staff would be present.

Secretary's Note. Graham Riley, who had originally been invited to attend the Forum meeting on 4th October, but had not attended, this Forum meeting, and was enabled by Christine Thornton to make a number of remarks and take questions under 'Any Other Business'. As his contribution to the meeting was similar in all essential respects to that of a guest speaker, I have taken the decision to minute this part of the meeting under Guest Speakers, rather than Any Other Business

5. Christine Thornton introduced Graham Riley, of First Leeds

5.1 Graham Riley acknowledged that he should have attended the previous Forum meeting. He apologised for not doing so and pointed out that he had entered the Thursday after the last Forum meeting in his electronic diary. He noted that he had not been given any information as to what had been discussed in the session involving Councillor James Lewis, Chairman of 'Metro'. The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor.

5.2 Doris Kenny referred to buses on the 64 and 74 routes. She noted that every third bus on the 74 route fails to operate, whilst every fourth bus is 30 minutes late. She noted that the 74 route is the only bus from the centre of Beeston to Morley. Graham Riley said that he would find out the cause of this. He noted that on the last occasion when he attended the Forum, he had agreed to look at the 64 route (the part of the route going through the South of Leeds is now the 74 route; it is now linked to the Aberford Service and now runs from Bramley garage.

5.3 Christine Thornton noted that at the last meeting of the Forum, a number of residents of Cottingley had complained about the absence of a direct bus service between Cottingley and Beeston. Doris Kenny noted that there is no running of the 64 (now 74) service after 6p.m and on Sundays. Rev Lindsey Pearson also criticised the absence of bus services between Cottingley and Beeston. Graham Riley said that anyone wishing to see the operation of additional bus services should make a business case for such services. With regards to Cottingley, he noted that the 55 service, which runs through Cottingley had become unreliable due to it being a cross city service. The service has been broken up , so that the 55 now terminates in the City Centre

5.4 Robert Winfield recalled that at the previous meeting, he had asked Councillor James Lewis about the possibility of introducing a ticketing system similar to the Oyster card in London, and was informed that First and Arriva were resistant to putting their tickets on the relevant computer system. Graham Riley disputed this, and noted that it is First's stated aim to see an Oyster Card introduced. He added that different bus companies operate different services and do things in different ways. He noted that London is different, in that bus services are controlled by the local authority. He would like to see a single carnet ticket and he acknowledged that current ticket arrangements are complicated. Christine Thornton asked who can sort this matter out.

5.5 Graham Riley noted that there is currently a big debate about various aspects of transport. There is, for example, an inquiry into the proposed trolleybus system. There is also a debate as to whether local government will get control of bus services in the form of quality contracts. He said that this is a long and tortuous process like anything to do with government. Graham Riley noted that there is a counterargument. He would like to improve services in a way which involves First spending the money rather than taxpayers. He noted that there is a conflict between First and the Passenger Transport Authority as to how to achieve better bus services.

5.6 A member of the audience asked why no bus services operate along Wesley Street. Graham Riley recalled that this issue was raised on the last occasion when he appeared at the Forum. He noted that transport planners try to get services as frequently as possible (for example, 7 to 8 minutes for the No 1 route along Beeston Road) The downside of this approach is that buses are taken away from routes which are not on the corridor. This is what has happened to Wesley Street.

5.7 A member of the audience noted that he lives at Elland Road, from where the bus fare into Leeds City Centre is £2.20. He noted that four people can share a taxi into Leeds City Centre for £1.05 per head. Noor Zaman pointed out that families are able to purchase a family Day Rider, which enables families to travel anywhere in West Yorkshire for a day for £8.

5.8 Robert Winfield raised two issues; the operation of bendybuses on the no 1 service (he recalled that on a previous occasion, the Forum had been given an assurance that bendybuses would no longer operate along this route) and the collapse of what he noted was normally the excellent service along Dewsbury Road the previous evening, when he had to wait 30 minutes for a bus. Dealing with the issue of bendybuses, Graham Riley pointed out that the bendybuses are W registered and coming towards the end of their operational lives. They had been used on the no 1 service as there has been an influx of students on Headingley Lane , and this requires extra journeys. Graham Riley acknowledged that the difficulties of the no 1 route through Headingley has an impact on Beeston. Traffic is frequently busy in Headingley, resulting in services being delayed. He noted that First now have people working at the Headingley Arndale Centre queuebusting, with the aim of getting passengers to load more quickly. As a result of this, it now takes one minute for 70 passengers to load, rather than 6 minutes in the past. With regard to the operation of the Dewsbury Road Service, Graham Riley noted that Leeds City Council had organised a bonfire on Soldiers Field on the previous evening. Buses had been diverted but had also been affected by car parking , so that it had been impossible to get buses through. He apologised for this situation. Extra buses had been operated in anticipation of increased demand, but this was of little consequence as they were unable to get through the traffic. He noted that the Dewsbury Road services employ 45 buses in total and that First are really struggling to get through the City Centre.

5.9 Pauline Johnson asked about evening and Sunday services. She noted that the 74a service is missed and asked whether it can be restored. Pauline Johnson said that she would like to see the new Routemaster bus. Graham Riley said that he would take back Pauline Johnson's comment about the 74a service. He noted that First has the new Routemaster Bus for a year and are taking it around to various locations. He could arrange to bring the bus to a location close to the venue of the meeting. Pauline Johnson said that the new Routemaster would be better than the trolleybus! Robert Winfield noted that he had ridden on a new Routemaster bus on a number of occasions whilst in London. He felt that the seating on the lower floor is somewhat cramped, and he also noted that there are issues relating to the ventilation, which are particularly apparent on warm days. He pointed out that this issue has been referred to in the media. Graham Riley urged the Forum to write in and get a bus up. Robert Winfield agreed to do this.

6. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7th August 2014. It was noted that the version of the minutes circulated at the following meeting on 4th September, had two pages missing, making it inappropriate for that meeting to consider the minutes. It was noted that a complete version of the minutes had been circulated to the members present at the current meeting. The minutes were agreed as a fair and accurate record of the meeting .

7. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4th September 2014. Robert Winfield pointed out that when the minutes were considered by the following meeting, on 2nd October 2014, Doris Brooke and Richard Bell said that they had not made remarks attributed to them in paragraph 10.1 of the minutes. No other difficulty with the minutes had been identified. Robert Winfield noted that he had redrafted the remarks attributed to Richard Bell, following a telephone conversation with him. He added that it was clear that the remarks attributed in the original draft of the minutes to Doris Brooke had been made by someone, but that his enquiries had failed to identify who had actually made the remarks. Accordingly, Robert Winfield had redrafted paragraph 10.1 in such a way as to refer to the remarks, but with no reference as to who made them. The minutes were agreed as a fair and accurate record of the meeting

8. The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 2nd October were agreed as a fair and accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising from any of the minutes which had just been approved.

9. Police Report. It was noted that no member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team was present at the meeting.

10. Report of the subgroup dealing with a Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston-

10.1 Mark Parry noted that he was making the report in the absence of Greg Turton.. He hoped that Forum members present at the meeting

will have seen banners advertising the Neighbourhood Plan and received a leaflet describing this. He noted that there is a website at beestonplan.weebly.com. He noted that the group seeking to create a neighbourhood plan is currently going through the necessary legalities, for example engaging with the community, giving local residents the opportunity to complete a questionnaire and bringing the views expressed together. It is also appropriate to contact local businesses; it had been decided to contact larger businesses as a pilot scheme, then contact smaller businesses. Mark Parry noted that Christine Thornton is currently contacting voluntary organisations. It is also important to contact interested parties such as the police and utilities. Mark Parry noted that an application to establish the Neighbourhood Forum is currently with Leeds City Council, and that the consultation period is currently taking place. So far, 55 individuals had indicated a wish to be members of the Neighbourhood Forum; these include two councillors, 5 people who are employed in the area, 19 people who own businesses in the area and 48 local residents. When the Neighbourhood Forum is designated, it will take the steps necessary to establish the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Forum will organise meetings and draw up plans setting out how Beeston should look, and possibly making a number of site allocations. The neighbourhood plan, when drawn up, will be submitted to a referendum of all residents of the area. Mark Parry noted that the current consultation process about the possible designation of the Neighbourhood Forum will conclude on 14th November. Anyone wishing to comment may do so on the Beeston Plan website, or by writing to the Chief Planning Officer of Leeds City Council. Mark Parry pointed out that in common with other organisations seeking to set up Neighbourhood Plans, we had received a grant from public funds; however, this is required to be spent by the end of the year. Rooms had been booked for meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan. The first meeting will take place either on Tuesday 17th January or Saturday 20th January. We have also received a quote for public liability insurance. Mark Parry added that the group seeking to set up a Neighbourhood Plan is also seeking to organise a trip to an area with a neighbourhood plan, in order to see what it looks like, to identify any problems which have been encountered, and to see how any such problems have been resolved. Mark Parry asked anyone who is interested in going on the trip to see him. The trip will be to Heathfield, Wolverhampton. No date has been fixed. A member of the audience wondered whether the group has identified five main themes where a difference would be made by introducing a neighbourhood plan. Mark Parry noted that the detail of the Neighbourhood Plan will be the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Forum. The Neighbourhood Forum could look at issues such as traffic management or planning although he was unsure as to the extent of the powers of a Neighbourhood Forum in relation to planning applications. Christine Thornton noted that a neighbourhood plan can incorporate policies relating to issues such as housing and green space.

10.2 Bill Birch noted that Greg Turton had sent an e mail to fellow members of the Committee. He read Greg Turton's e mail in which he noted that earlier in the year, Councillor Peter Gruen had sought our views in relation to the draft core strategy and the possible site allocations through the Neighbourhood Plan. Our reply gave support to the draft core strategy but gave notice of possible site allocations arrived at as a result of an investigation into the housing needs of Beeston. The Ice Pak and Tesco sites were mentioned. In the draft core strategy, the housing target for Leeds was set up to 2025. Greg Turton's e mail added that to his knowledge the outline planning permission for housing of the Ice Pak site was part of the supporting documentation in this decision. Greg Turton added that he recommends that the Council is requested by the Beeston Community Forum to delegate the future of the Ice Pak site to the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum, when designated, as part of the duty to support. Greg Turton added that it is only by doing this that those who live and work in Beeston can get involved in and arrive at policies that are owned by the Community. Greg Turton noted that there is a precedent for this already in the Neighbourhood Planning process. In Thame, Oxfordshire, the future housing sites in the area became so contentious that the District Council delegated this task to the Neighbourhood Plan. The plan passed the referendum and all site allocations for housing approved. Bill Birch proposed that we write to Leeds City Council in line with Greg Turton's suggestion, but that we also include the site of Jubilee House in our letter so as to make clear to Leeds City Council that we want a say in the future use of the land. This was approved unanimously, with one abstention.

10.3 Report of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th October 2014. Christine Thornton noted that the meeting had discussed the contentious proposal for a footpath at Cockburn High School. There had also been some discussion about the timings of Forum meetings in 2015. There was also a discussion about the guest speakers for the Forum meeting currently taking place as no guest speakers had been arranged previously. There was also a discussion about the Neighbourhood Plan. Christine Thornton noted that there was also a discussion about Beeston Village Community Centre. There was discussion about a controversy arising from criticism of the action of two Forum members who arrived at the Community Centre early for a meeting relating to the Beeston Neighbourhood Plan. Robert Winfield noted that, in line with normal practice, formal notice of the dates for meetings during 2015 would be given on the agenda for the Forum AGM which will be taking place on Thursday 4th December. He noted that there would be three departures from the normal practice of holding meetings on the first Thursday of the month. The January meeting would obviously not take place on 1st January, and will instead be held on 8th January. The May meeting will take place on 14th May, rather than 7th May, which is polling day in the General Election, in line with a long established convention that the Forum will not meet on polling day in any election. The November meeting will be held on 12th November, rather than 5th November as the committee has taken the view that it would not be appropriate for the Forum to meet on bonfire night.

11. Correspondence

11.1 Robert Winfield referred to the controversy which had arisen following the submission of a planning application for a footpath at Cockburn School. The Forum had taken a decision that Robert Winfield write to Peter Nuttall of Cockburn School, and Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council to express our concerns about the poor communication with local residents in relation to the planning application. It was noted that these deficiencies in communication had led to wild rumours about the purpose of the planning application in the area. He had received no reply from Peter Nuttall, but Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer of Leeds City Council had replied on behalf of Tom Riordan. He noted that the application was validated on 12th August 2014 and advertised by posting three site notices on adjacent lampposts on 22nd August. This is a standard process of advertising a planning application. The local planning authority has no control on the timetable for the submission of any application and, providing that it is valid, it must be added to the council's planning register and determined within the statutory timetable. Advertising of the application is usually done as soon as possible. The public consultation process generated a significant number of local objections as well as local member interest. The application was submitted by Childrens Services on behalf of the school. It was not an application which was encouraged by the local planning authority.

Following the assessment of the application, the planning officer dealing with this matter was also concerned and shared residents' views; that the proposal would cause harm to the living conditions of surrounding residents by virtue of increased noise and comings and goings. Additionally, there was also significant concern that the proposal would also lead to local congestion on the surrounding highway network as well as creating conflicting vehicle movements. Accordingly, the applicant was informed that the proposal could not be supported in planning terms. On receipt of this information, the applicant chose to withdraw the application and this was completed on 6th October 2014. Following comments received from Cockburn School, however, it would appear that it was never their intention to secure a secondary permanent access, but sought an emergency access point only. Should the applicant choose to resubmit on this basis, it would require a new application and the description would need to be amended to reflect this change. Any such application would of course be readvertised and local members consulted directly. Robert Winfield noted that the letter had failed to resolve a number of important points which had led to the Forum taking a decision to write to Tom Riordan and Peter Nuttall about the matter. Robert Winfield proposed that we write further letters to seek answers to these original queries. This was agreed. A member of the audience noted that there had been a lot of furore about the planning application and noted that he has been contemplating buying a house in the area, but was reluctant to do so until he knows what is going on.

11.2 Robert Winfield read an e mail from Victoria Hinchliff Walker of the Leeds City Council Planning Department, which had been addressed to the Councillors for Beeston and Holbeck ward and copied to him, explaining that she has received a number of standard letters relating to 'no more development in the Beeston Village Area'. The letters are all the same and have space for people to put their name and address on. The letters essentially request a Health and Well Being impact Assessment and a comprehensive local plan for the area. They also state that if the council grants planning permission to any 'major development' they will refer the matter to the Secretary of State and the National Planning Casework Team, and seek judicial review regarding the council's behaviour. She added that there is no indication as to where these letters come from although there is mention of the 'Save Our Beeston Campaign', nor is there any indication as to whether they relate to any particular development or not. She added that a colleague had received a box of these letters totalling 700 letters and has been asked to ensure that these are lodged as objections, initially to the Ice Pak application and the Asda Old Lane application for a petrol filling station. The covering letter also asks that they be lodged as objections to any other major development in the Beeston Village Area. The covering letter is signed by Sean Sturman, Honorary Secretary of the Save Our Beeston Campaign.

Victoria Hinchliff Walker asked the recipients of the e mail whether they are aware of this campaign group and its management, as she thinks that it is vital that they engage in any local planning initiatives that are getting under way and also that they are informed of the appropriate methods for objecting to planning applications and also third party rights of appeal. She noted that objection letters cannot be assigned to applications unless they are submitted specifically in relation to that application. The letters also do not raise relevant planning matters regarding the actual schemes, rather they are objecting to any further development full stop. She added that it seems that someone is going to a lot of trouble, but this may be of limited consequence in shaping the future of the area. Bill Birch said that Victoria Hinchliff Walker should have sent her e mail to the Secretary of the Save Our Beeston Campaign, not to the Forum. He described her actions as out of order. Sean Sturman confirmed that he had received no communication from Victoria Hinchliff Walker. The meeting agreed (unanimously with two abstentions) to a proposal from Bill Birch that we write to Victoria Hinchliff Walker expressing our concerns that she had raised her concerns with Councillors and other organisations but not the Save Our Beeston Campaign. Christine Thornton observed that many people who were at the meeting had not previously attended a meeting of the Forum. She added that it is not the fault of the Forum that Victoria Hinchliff Walker had written to the Forum. She might have been under the impression that Save Our Beeston Campaign is connected with the Beeston Community Forum. Robert Winfield noted that the constitution of the Forum is clear; that any resident of Beeston may attend meetings of the Forum and vote on any issues which are to be determined. Adam Cooper said that Leeds City Council should respond to residents who have sent in objections. He added that the action of the planning authority in writing to the Forum was underhand and might have the effect of turning one party against another party.

There was considerable criticism of the fact that the Councillors were absent from the meeting. Christine Thornton noted that Councillors Adam Ogilvie and Angela Gabriel were on holiday, whilst David Congreve is currently the Lord Mayor of Leeds. They could not have anticipated that an issue of this nature would arise. Adam Cooper felt that the Councillors should have ensured that they were represented at the meeting by a deputy. Doris Kenny felt that we should write a strong letter about this situation. Robert Winfield noted that he is a political opponent of the Councillors, but stressed that everyone is entitled to take a holiday. They could not reasonably have anticipated that such an issue would arise in their absence. He added that the concept of a 'Deputy Councillor' is somewhat bizarre. How would such a deputy be chosen? Bill Birch stressed that there is no criticism of Christine Thornton, Robert Winfield or the remainder of the Forum Committee. He noted that the Save Our Beeston Campaign are seeking to secure the same objects as the Neighbourhood Forum; that is decisions about Beeston are made in Beeston. He added that we do not want to get into a situation in which everything in Beeston is developed, so there is nothing to have a Neighbourhood Plan about. A member of the audience said that Victoria Hinchliff Walker had written the letter as though the Save Our Beeston Campaign and the Forum were insignificant. Robert Winfield said that he hoped that the representatives of the Save Our Beeston Campaign present at the meeting will wish to become involved in the Forum, possibly by seeking election to the Committee at the AGM next month, and the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum. He had consistently expressed the view that the Forum is more likely to be effective if its meetings were attended by more people. Richard Bell noted that he had sought to contact Adam Ogilvie at the start of the week and was informed that he is on holiday. He added that we would want to understand the views of councillors about contentious issues. Christine Thornton noted that the Councillors see the minutes of Forum meetings, and we can also alert them to any contentious issues. A member of the audience said that no one is blaming the forum for the fact that it received the e mail from Victoria Hinchliff Walker. He added that the Forum does a good job, month after month. People are interested in wider planning matters than the Ice Pak site. Local residents want their voice to be heard. Some people do not know about the forum which he felt should be publicised to more people. He added that a number of people had attended the meeting because of the Neighbourhood Plan, rather than just the Ice Pak application. He said that the proposal to redevelop Beeston Village Community Centre is fantastic. If residents had not attended the current meeting, they would not have heard about it. The same applies to Sue Watson's presentation about Leeds United FC. These are positives and he hoped that people would turn up to Forum meetings in the future. Doris Kenny observed that many people do not know that the Forum exists, including her neighbours who live on the doorstep of the venue for meetings. Christine Thornton noted that John Fenton puts flyers in local shops describing Forum meetings and the guest speakers attending meetings. Mary Dinsdale noted that she had been unable to attend the last Beeston Festival but noted that at the previous festival, 2000 leaflets describing the

Neighbourhood Forum. A member of the audience asked whether the Forum has a website and a facebook page. Robert Winfield noted that the Forum has a website the address for which is stated on the forum letterhead and at the head of agendas for meetings. There is also a facebook page but he acknowledged that this has been neglected somewhat. A member of the audience noted that he had not previously heard of the Forum

11.3 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Philip Bartram of Asda Stores Limited . He noted the comments from some members of the Forum that they had not been consulted about Asda 's plans. He added that he had not, at any point stated that there was any kind of formal survey of all customers but informal day to day contact with all customers. He added that it is abundantly clear to Asda that freedom to shop when they want to and access the products they want to , when they shop are key customer expectations.. Philip Bartram apologised for the fact that the Forum had not been consulted about the planning application for a petrol filling station but noted that convenient access to low priced fuel is always an extremely popular attraction for local drivers and shoppers, saving them money and encouraging them to shop locally rather than travel further afield. He added that it is disappointing that the Forum had objected to the plans for a Petrol filling station

12 The Annual General Meeting- Christine Thornton drew the attention of members present to the passage on the front of the agenda, referring to the Forum's AGM which will take place on Thursday 4th December.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Bill Birch noted that this is the last opportunity for the Forum to determine its response to the revised planning application submitted by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak site. He proposed that the Forum object to the plans on the following grounds:-

- I) that the description of the development as outlined in the headline on the planning application is misleading
- II) the necessary baseline monitoring with respect to noise atmospheric pollution, traffic monitoring and endangered species has not yet been completed
- III) the developer has not carried out an independent assessment to establish the need for the development
- IV) it is still too large a development for the area
- V) it is not compliant with the current Leeds Unitary Development Plan
- VI) it is inappropriate in a predominantly residential area
- VII) the site already has outline planning permission for residential use

Bill Birch also argued that this will inevitably increase traffic in the area , which will inevitably have a number of effects including significantly increasing the probability of death or injury to local primary school children going to or from St Anthony's Primary School (130m from the site) , Hugh Gaitskell Primary School (500m from the site) and Beeston Primary School. He added that the level of air pollution in Beeston is already significantly higher than the city wide average; this is a result of the large number of planning permissions previously granted by Leeds City Council , and such a development will only make matters worse. Beeston already has a very high rate of residents with respiratory dysfunction. In all probability the development will give rise to an increase in 1 hour leq noise levels by in excess of 5db(A) which is widely acknowledged to be the threshold for nuisance complaints from local residents .Bill Birch added that the excavation of the underground car park requires a detailed site investigation to be carried out to establish whether the excavation can be carried out safely so as not to compromise the structural integrity of the adjoining buildings. Given the depth of the proposed investigation a contaminated land survey needs to be part of the investigation as well as a more detailed mining report provided by an independent chartered mining engineer.

Christine Thornton noted that there is a committee meeting before the AGM at which a detailed discussion of this matter can take place. The forum agreed to a proposal that the Committee shall formulate a suitable letter of objection on the basis that the Forum has already decided , in principle to object. This was passed with two votes against. Christine Thornton said that she had abstained on this proposal as she had not yet had the opportunity to study the plans. Adam Cooper noted at the last Beeston Forum meeting, it was not known what would happen in relation to the planning application , whilst the next meeting takes place at the close of the period during which submissions in relation to the planning application are permitted.

13.2 A discussion took place about the letter sent by the Save Our Beeston Campaign to Leeds City Council. Sean Sturman passed a copy of the letter to Robert Winfield. Christine Thornton wondered how the Save Our Beeston Campaign defines Beeston Village. Bill Birch criticised Leeds City Council for referring to West Hunslet as 'Beeston' . Robert Winfield noted that the Beeston Neighbourhood Area, which has been approved by Leeds City Council and is therefore enshrined in law excludes West Hunslet and other areas which are commonly referred to in the media as 'Beeston'. He hoped that the media would stop referring to areas outside Beeston as 'Beeston'

13.3 Rev Lindsay Pearson said that the Beeston Christmas lights would be switched on at 5.30p.m on Thursday 4th December. Free food would be served at St. Mary's Parish Centre

13.4 Christine Thornton noted that she had been informed by Doris Brooke that she cannot continue to serve refreshments to members following the conclusion of Forum meetings. In addition, Mary Mason who had undertaken this task in the past, has been seriously ill for several months. She urged anyone who wish to carry out this task to come forward.