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## BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

### Beeston Forum General Meeting - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016

#### Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker- John Cummins, Groundwork
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016
5. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan
6. Report of the Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016
7. Correspondence
8. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mr. A. Broadbent, Mrs. C. Broadbent, Mrs. M. Broadbent, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K.J. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mrs. J. Bush, Mr. S. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. A. Cooper, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. K. Hewson, Mr. J. Hook, Mr. C. Hendrick Ward, Miss P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. E. Leatham, Mr. A. McGrath, Mrs. D. McGuigan, Mrs. M. Munro, Mr. M. Parry, Rev. L. Pearson and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield (when the minutes were presented to the following meeting for approval, it was noted that Dennis Bottomley, who attended the meeting, was not listed as having attended)

(Secretary's Note. It is plain that a number of individuals who attended the meeting had no opportunity to complete the attendance sheet. Any person who attended the meeting, but who is not listed as such above should draw this to the attention of the meeting whereupon I would be delighted to propose an appropriate amendment to the minutes. Additionally, at the last meeting of the Forum's committee, I expressed concerns that virtually no one states their e mail address on the attendance sheet, even though the attendance sheet had been redesigned some time ago so that Forum members could state their e mail address. The e mail addresses will not be passed to any third party without prior consent (which would rarely, if ever be sought in any event), and will be used to set up a database which will be used to inform members of important developments, for example, if it is ever necessary to cancel a meeting due to bad weather)

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting
2. Apologies for absence were received from Gohar Almass and Jeremy Morton. Additionally, it was noted that Insp. Jon Arrowsuch, who was to have been the guest speaker representing West Yorkshire Police would be unable to attend as he is working nights.
3. Guest Speakers- Christine Thornton introduced the Guest Speakers; Sgt John Pickard and PC Dave Beeley from West Yorkshire

## Police

3.1 Sgt John Pickard noted that as a result of recent changes to the police force in the Inner South District, Insp. Jon Arrowsuch, who was to have been the guest speaker, was working nights and consequently unable to attend. He added that policing has changed significantly in the past month and noted that he works with Claire Godfey, another Inner South Sergeant. His colleague, PC Dave Beeley will address crimes in the area. The police will seek to identify people committing crime in order to minimise the level of crime. The Forum might have other priorities. The issue is how we can give the best service from West Yorkshire police within the parameters in which the police operate. He is aware of the fact that Chris Bowen formerly attended Forum meetings and noted that he can only give an honest answer to questions which are asked, which is not necessarily the answer which is welcome. He noted that there is a team of PCs and PCSOs covering the whole of the Inner South area which includes Beeston, Middleton and Hunslet. There are 11 PCs who work long hours to implement the police's plans

3.2 PC Dave Beeley noted that he works hard, and stated that that is what is expected. With regard to crimes, he noted that there were eight 'Burglary Others' over the past month, including a burglary at the Your Choices Auto Centre, from which a car was stolen. PC Beeley suspects that the person responsible has been captured on CCTV. The rest are shed burglaries where the thieves typically break in, unscrew hinges and remove doors and steal the contents of the shed. Bikes and washing powder had been stolen. Locations in which the thefts had occurred include Woodlea Place and the Parkwoods. There were eight burglary dwellings. In four cases, entry had been forced, either by snapping locks or breaking through windows. In two cases, there were insecure doors, for example doors being left unlocked overnight. There had also been two attempts. Locations at which these crimes occurred include Town Street, Redhall Crescent, Dewsbury Road, Allenby Road, Cardinal Square and Parkwood Avenue. A number of suspects have been arrested and enquiries are ongoing for all but one of the crimes. In one case, no further action was taken as the Crown Prosecution Service had decided that there is insufficient evidence. There were sixteen thefts from motor vehicles; in fourteen of these cases, the vehicles had been left unlocked and there were two break ins. A member of the audience wondered whether someone is going around targeting cars with a scanner. PC Beeley said that he would not rule this out but it is possible that a seat belt had become stuck in a car door. Sgt. Pickard advised drivers to try the car door to check whether the door has been properly locked. This helps the police to minimise crime.

3.3 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Christine Thornton wondered what a scanner is. Sgt. Pickard noted that a scanner stops an infra red signal getting to the locking mechanism on the door. These can be bought cheaply and relatively easily and prevents car doors being locked. John Hook noted that the scanner is a key fob. He said that several people have been going around with a key fob which unlocks a multitude of vehicles, not just one vehicle. Sgt. Pickard acknowledged that he is unaware of that type of scanner. PC Beeley said that this needs to plug into a vehicle's computer. John Hook said that he had seen a post on facebook explaining that someone is going around with a key fob and unlocking vehicles. He does not know whether the vehicle involved is new or stolen from a dealership. Sgt. Pickard noted that when interviewed, suspects have acknowledged that they walk around for hours trying car door handles. It is also possible to watch a house on a mobile phone when the owner is on holiday. There are plenty of ways to get into a range of vehicles. John Hook explained that he had just received an e mail saying 'we are aware of this, do the police know about it, as mentioned on facebook'. The e mail sought details of anything which is happening on the Links, Southleigh Drive and Southleigh Avenue. It was noted that people had discovered that a car was opened.

3.4 Colin Hendrick Ward asked whether devices are ever recovered from criminals and what they are used for. Sgt. Pickard said that devices are recovered from criminals, but not often. By typing words such as 'system updates' into google, the police can gain intelligence. Some of the devices look like a key fob, whilst others are larger. Certain keys can get into cars. If breaking in in the middle of the night, there is an opportunity for thieves to throw devices away. Sometimes, these are recovered by the police. A member of the audience asked whether these scanners have a legal use. Eddie Leatham said that if there are only illegal uses for these devices, their sale should not be permitted. PC Beeley noted that if a key has been left in a car, a company can unlock it. It was noted that devices such as those discussed can be bought on the internet from any country. Sgt. Pickard observed that in many cases, devices are used for legitimate purposes, then an illegitimate use develops.

3.5 PC Beeley noted that there were only 32 crimes in the whole of Beeston during the last month. Shaun Sturman pointed out that twelve months ago, the Save Our Beeston Campaign started a facebook group, which now has 3500 members, 95% of whom live in the area. He had recently spent an hour and a half looking through posts on the facebook groups, and found references to 60 crimes, some of them serious, within a fourteen day period. He noted that some of the crimes involve taking a phone from a person's hand at a bus stop. This is a massive concern and there is a need to do something. He added that Councillors Adam Ogilvie and Angela Gabriel are in touch with the facebook group all the time. He asked the police to consider joining the facebook group so that the police are able to address the issues which are raised. Sgt. Pickard pointed out that there is a mechanism to report crime and he would not want someone to report crime on facebook. Sean Sturman said that he has been trying to tell people on facebook to report crimes officially. He added that 2000 people visit the group every week and is a perfect place to advise and allay fears. Colin Hendrick Ward noted that the interface with the police is instantaneous. Sgt. Pickard said that he could not have police staff members looking at facebook. Sean Sturman said that five minutes per day would be sufficient, and that many people who had attending the meeting were expecting Insp. Arrowsuch to be in attendance. Christine Thornton observed 'we all were'. Robert Winfield suggested that victims of crime who wish could report the crime to the police online, and copy and paste this onto facebook. He noted that this had been suggested at the meeting of the Save Our Beeston Campaign which had taken place several days previously. Sean Sturman suggested that the police and the Save Our Beeston Campaign should work together. Christine Thornton said that people should report crime to the police rather than expecting the police to visit a facebook group. Sean Sturman acknowledged that this is a question of getting people educated. Sgt. Pickard acknowledged that there are issues around whether the police are liked and trusted and whether they are considered to

give good service. Sgt. Pickard said that people must be persuaded to report crime. He could not have staff constantly looking at facebook. He added that if a person is a victim of crime, he has a duty to report the crime to the police. This contributes to the police's intelligence and enables the police to take decisions as to where to patrol. The police had indeed hammered certain parts of Beeston and pushed crime towards Morley. If criminals are found, the level of crime slows down. This approach has worked

3.6 Richard Bell referred to Sgt. Pickard's remarks about the advantage to the police if crime is reported. His experience is that it can be hard work to contact the police. He once tried to phone 101 and was on the phone for an hour. Sometimes, callers are then asked intrusive and irrelevant questions. If the outcome is not wanted, there is a wasted journey and the experience is often shared with others. Sometimes people take the law into their own hands as the police are seen as irrelevant. He could see tragedies occurring. Sgt. Pickard noted that there have been two arrests for arson during a week and this shows that the police can be relevant. He added that the police can only do their part. He noted that judges and magistrates do not attend meetings of the Forum. The police asks judges to do certain things and they do not do it. That is soul destroying. Richard Bell repeated that he could see tragedies arising from the frustration about the police's activities. Sgt. Pickard said that an innocent party should never become an offender. Steve Francis noted that if 101 is better these things would not happen. Sgt. Pickard said that the 101 service had made the news. It is abysmal but this is the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Steve Francis noted that the service is being offered but it doesn't work. Adam Cooper noted that a burglar breaking into his brother's car was and the Council. He was due in court the following day for offences previously committed but was out on bail. He noted that the suspect was Adam Pitts, aged 23 or 24, who had been sentenced to four years for burglary and had been caught climbing into his brother's house at the age of 15. Obviously, some people are committing crime over and over again. Surely we can do more. Sgt. Pickard said that all people can do is report crime and give the police as much information as possible. The police can arrest suspects, carry out the necessary process and take the matter to the Crown Prosecution Service. However, it is not easy to find certain people. Sometimes, they do not comply with bail conditions, which means that they should not have been granted these conditions. Adam Cooper noted that his father had recently seen two people going to commit a crime at the home of an elderly neighbour who had recently fallen and broken his hip. His father grabbed one of the people whilst another neighbour grabbed the other person. One of the people claimed to be a child aged 12 years but had a beard. He noted that the police had said that the crime must be reported, but he noted that the boy claiming to be 12 years old could not be taken into custody without the knowledge of a parent. Sgt. Pickard referred to the politics of policing. The way the police deal with juveniles is subject to substantial regulation from the government. It is, for example, illegal to put a juvenile through a custody suite which is frustrating. He added that in his opinion, which is based on 20 years of experience that the police sometimes gives juveniles the benefit of the doubt even if they know they should not get this. If they have done something wrong, they should not get the benefit of the doubt. There is nothing a police officer likes more than to arrest someone.

3.7 A member of the audience referred to a quote 'none of us can do anything any more'. It was noted that people used to deal out their own justice. Sgt. Pickard noted that he used to work in a mining town where that used to happen, but it cannot happen now.

3.8 Stuart Casserley noted that in Glasgow, it was known that 15% of all stolen property used to end up in a certain market. He wondered whether there is a similar place in Leeds. Sgt. Pickard said certain people will offer stolen property for sale on eBay and gumtree. The police will act to recover the property. He recalled that he used to work at Maltby where two or three people committed most of the burglaries. Stolen property would be found at their homes. This does not happen now as there are 'newer' people committing crimes

3.9 Adam Cooper asked Sgt. Pickard what the latest situation is about the family feud. Sgt. Pickard replied 'What family feud?' to which a member of the audience responded 'You're kidding me'. However Sgt Pickard recognised the family involved in the feud. PC Beeley said that there has been no change in the situation; the members of the family are on bail in different parts of the country

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

5. Matter Arising – Steve Francis wondered whether Stewart Robinson had sent the Forum any money. Christine Thornton said he had not done so. Councillor Angela Gabriel suggested that we remind him

6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Forum. Robert Winfield reported that the Neighbourhood Forum meeting on 25th February had been inquorate. The Committee is increasingly concerned about the succession of inquorate meetings, and had discussed a constitutional amendment which would reduce the quorum. The Committee meeting also had a discussion about a planning application affecting a property, 44 Barkly Road. Committee members had expressed different opinions as to whether it would be appropriate for the Neighbourhood Forum to object to planning applications, and it was resolved to consult Leeds City Council as to whether this would be appropriate. Leeds City Council then advised that it would be appropriate for the Neighbourhood Forum to comment about planning applications. Robert Winfield noted that it was his intention for the Neighbourhood Forum to debate and come to a resolution about this planning application, either at the Forum meeting, or if this was inquorate, at a special committee meeting to be held after the Forum meeting. However, the intention to do so was frustrated by the fact that there was no quorum of committee members present at the Forum meeting. Robert Winfield noted that following the meeting, Arthur Kirby had telephoned the Leeds City Council Planning Department and was informed that the planning application had been approved. Christine Thornton felt that the Neighbourhood Forum is going around in circles as none of its meetings are quorate. She urged Neighbourhood Forum members to make every effort to attend future meetings. Robert Winfield pointed out that the AGM of the Neighbourhood Forum will take place on Thursday 26th May.

7. Report of Committee meeting held on Thursday 18th February. Christine Thornton reported that this was largely taken up with a

discussion about the Aspiring Communities planning application and the proposal to extend the area covered by the Residents Parking scheme on Elland Road match days.

8. Aspiring Communities Planning Application. Bill Birch noted that a group of local residents attended the meeting of the Leeds City Council Plans Panel which discussed the Aspiring Communities Planning application. The purpose of the meeting was for plans panel members to consider the recommendation of council officers that Leeds City Council defend its position to oppose the planning application. It was noted that Aspiring Communities had appealed to the Planning Inspectorate which would therefore determine the planning application. Leeds City Council Officers had given Aspiring Communities plenty of opportunity to answer a number of important questions which had been set out in a letter from Martin Sellens of the planning Department. Aspiring Communities then appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, rather than answering the questions. Martin Sellens made the case to the Plans Panel which voted with no votes against (two abstentions) to support the council officers' opposition to the application. It is hoped that we will hear from Leeds City Council as soon as it hears from the Planning Inspectorate as to how it will determine the planning application (by hearing or by a public inquiry)

Councillor David Congreve said that all the objections to the application will be given to the Planning Inspectorate who can look through them individually. He then explained the distinction between a hearing and inquiry. A hearing is where both sides put their case, the inspector listens and sifts through the case. The main objectors (but not all objectors) will be notified of the date. The inspector will determine who speaks (for example, representatives of a couple of organisations). This is not quite as formal as an inquiry, the conduct of which comes closer to court proceedings, where supporters of and objectors to the planning application give evidence. Both sides are generally represented by a barrister, and a speaker can be challenged. Both a hearing and an inquiry take place in public. The planning inspectorate will decide whether the application is determined by an inquiry or a hearing. Bill Birch wondered whether Leeds City Council have contacted the planning inspectorate and how soon they will fix a date. David Congreve said it is likely to be a while before the hearing because the Planning Inspectorate is busy, and different inspectors have different areas of expertise so that the Planning Inspectorate will appoint an inspector with expertise in that type of planning application. The determination of the application is unlikely before June as the Planning Inspectorate must wait for someone to become free.

Bill Birch asked whether members of the public can make submissions. David Congreve said that comments are probably closed but he is unsure of the situation. It may be that such comments could be taken into account. Christine Thornton said that it is just a matter of waiting. Bill Birch said that we do not want to be surprised. We need to be ready with whatever statements are required. David Congreve said that objectors would not be able to come up with new information. Bill Birch added that any comments must relate to planning issues otherwise they will be ignored.

Colin Hendrick Ward pointed out that Leeds City Council has stated that the application is likely to be determined by a hearing. He also noted that there was a report on South Leeds Life which quoted Aspiring Communities as saying that they completely refute what Leeds City Council has said. Robert Winfield pointed out that he had been requested by the Forum committee to write to Martin Sellens to seek clarification as to the difference between an inquiry and a hearing. He had received an automated response saying that Martin Sellens is currently unwell, which presumably explains the lack of a substantive response. David Congreve noted that he is aware that Martin Sellens has been ill, and had in fact been due to retire at the end of March although he may work a couple of additional months as the Planning Department is short staffed. David Congreve described him as 'a decent man'. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Bill Birch that we send Martin Sellens our best regards. Christine Thornton expressed the hope that we would be able to get through a meeting without mentioning the Aspiring Communities Planning Application. Colin Hendrick Ward noted that he had expressed an identical sentiment in a Save Our Beeston weekly report.

9. Proposed Extension to the Residents Car parking Scheme for Elland Road Match Days- Robert Winfield noted that as a result of a resolution of the Committee, he had submitted a holding objection to the proposal. The letter explains that we are not opposed in principle to the proposal and we are indeed aware of evidence that the proposal commands the support of local residents, but we are concerned with aspects of the consultation process and of the scheme itself. We fear that the proposed extension to the area covered by the scheme will not solve the problem of on street parking but displace the problem to areas not covered by the scheme, residents of which have not been consulted about the proposal. We also expressed concerns that residents are restricted to one permit each, which would make large gatherings of relatives and friends on match days difficult if not impossible. We are also concerned that businesses would be charged £75 for each permit and asked whether businesses have been consulted about this. We also feared that there would be an over zealous issue of fixed penalty notices in relation to the scheme. We also expressed concerns that the proposal to extend the scheme does not appear to have been accompanied by a single public meeting and requested the attendance of a Council Officer at a future Forum meeting in order to discuss the scheme.

The meeting agreed to a proposal from Councillor David Congreve that we send a copy of this letter to Councillor Richard Lewis. Richard Bell expressed concerns about the funding of the scheme and noted that Leeds City Council has little money for services. Councillor Angela Gabriel pointed out that the scheme is being paid for by section 106 money from the PFI scheme for the police station, which has nothing to do with the council. She added that the purpose of the scheme is not to fine people. She noted that one parking permit is issued for each car registered to a household, and households would be able to request additional permits if, for example they are having a party. Richard Bell said that it would be easier for residents to sort issues out (for example request the cancellation of parking tickets). He asked what the situation would be if two brothers visit a house and there is only one permit. One of them would receive a ticket. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that if people do not want the extended scheme, it will not happen. Bill Birch said that his biggest concern is the fact that the boundary for the extended scheme has been drawn on Theodore Street. This will push parking from one side of the boundary line to the other. Those who are inside the area have been fully informed whilst those

outside it are ignorant. This is not a full consultation, but he stressed that he is not blaming the councillors for this situation. The council had sent letters to residents in the area covered by the expanded scheme, but had not informed residents who are just outside the area. Bill Birch felt this is illegal as people who would suffer from the introduction of the scheme have not been consulted about it. He felt that residents of these areas should have received letters. He hoped that a Council Officer will attend a future Forum meeting and speak about potential alternatives. We want proper consultation and are not getting that.

10. Correspondence:- Robert Winfield referred to the enquiries about alternative venues for Forum meetings during the forthcoming redevelopment of Beeston Village Community Centre. He had heard from St Anthony's Church that the church would only be available on Fridays. He recalled that he had been told that the meeting room at Elland Road Police Station would be available, whilst the room at St Mary's Church would be available on Thursdays. Robert Winfield, however expressed disappointment that he had not heard from Hugh Gaitskell School, which, in his judgement, would be the obvious alternative venue if it were available. Eddie Leatham, who is a governor of the school, felt that their response would be likely to be negative.

11. Beeston Village Community Centre. Robert Winfield noted that there had been a meeting of the Users Committee on Monday 29th February. He noted that the meeting was dominated by two issues. There was a discussion about access to the centre, bearing in mind the concerns which had been expressed about people travelling to and from the centre during the hours of darkness in particular. Martin Dean of Leeds City Council attended the meeting, and was shown aspects of the area around the building which have given rise to concerns. With regard to the forthcoming redevelopment of the centre, it was noted that the National Lottery, to whom an application for funding had been made was seeking matching funding of around £100000. Anyone who is aware of possible sources for this funding was encouraged to contact Health for All (Leeds) which leases the building from Leeds City Council.

## 12 Any Other Business

12.1 John Cunningham noted that Mick Mason had recently been very ill. He had been in St. James's Hospital since January as a result of difficulties with his gall bladder and had been proscribed morphine. Christine Thornton observed that she used to see him on a regular basis but not recently. She added that his wife Mary had been ill for some time, but is now apparently okay. She wondered whether Doris Brooke was aware of his illness. Doris Brooke said that she was not aware. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Christine Thornton that we deliver a suitable card to his home.

12.2 Christine Thornton noted that the Forum had booked a stall at the Beeston Festival on Saturday 4th June

12.3 Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that the AGM of Beeston in Bloom would take place on Monday 7th March. She noted that a majority of those currently involved are over 60 years of age and the oldest is 85.. She added that new ideas are welcome. Members need not be involved in gardening but could, for example help on plant stalls. She noted that without Beeston In Bloom, there would be no planters, hanging baskets and flowers.

12.4 Rosemary Casserley wondered whether it might be possible for the Forum to secure a speaker in relation to the forthcoming EU Referendum. Councillor Angela Gabriel suggested writing to the Members of the European Parliament, including Richard Corbett. Steve Francis noted that he had been leafleting for the Remain campaign and noted that Hilary Benn has an article in the latest edition of South Leeds Life advocating that the UK remain a member of the European Union. Robert Winfield (who pointed out that he has publicly declared that he will be voting for the UK to leave the EU), noted that no guest speaker has so far been invited to the June Forum meeting, which would be the last meeting before the Referendum. Christine Thornton stressed that any invitations should be balanced between supporters and opponents of continued membership of the EU.