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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Community Forum General Meeting – Thursday 1st October 2009 Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speaker- Mr Chris Edwards, Chief Executive, Education Leeds**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum on 3rd September 2009**
- 5. Correspondence**
- 6. Report of Committee Meeting 17th September 2009**
- 7. Report of Beeston Village Community Centre Steering Committee**
- 8. Beeston Parish Council Steering Committee**
- 9. To consider whether the Forum should make a submission to the OFT inquiry about bus services**
- 10. The Beeston Forum AGM- 3rd December 2009**
- 10. Any Other Business**

Please note that the next meeting of the Forum will take place on Thursday 12th November (same starting time and venue)

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 3rd September 2009

Attendance:- C. Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Almond, C. Beck, Mr. R. Bell, Mr.W.J. Birch, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Councillor D. Congreve, C.M. David, B. Drury, Mr.J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, PCSO S. Goulding, Mr. J. Hodgson, P. Hutchinson, Miss . P. Johnson, R. Kitson, Mr. J. Lee, MBE, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs M. Mason, Z. Mwanje, Mr. R.G. Nevin, Mrs. E. Newton, M. Noble, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. J. Peckham, Rev. S. Sowden, Mr. F. Swift, Mr. M. Unwan and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks-** Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and pointed out that our guest speaker; Rt. Hon Hilary Benn, M.P. was en route to the meeting and expected to be present within 10-15 minutes. As a result of this, the meeting would start without him. Christine Thornton noted that this is the second Forum meeting to take place at our new venue. She welcomed a number of new faces to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies for absence** were received from Kathleen Fenton
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2009.** Richard Bell referred to the comments attributed to him in paragraph 6.2 of the minutes regarding him drinking cider as a child. He stressed that he

did not do this all the time. Christine Thornton expressed criticism of the fact that the minutes went into great detail in recording the contribution from Sgt. Sarah Whitworth of West Yorkshire Police, but had merely referred to the contributions from Alan Jones and Emma Rooney. Robert Winfield undertook to take on board this point when preparing minutes in the future. Robert Winfield explained the change of style in the minutes. As a result of technical issues with his computer system which he would be happy to explain upon request, minutes are now been prepared as PDF documents and were on two sheets of paper rather than one. The opportunity had been taken to increase the print size. This was welcomed by several members. Christine Thornton noted that the Forum had acquired a photocopier which is being used in the production of the minutes.

4. Correspondence:-

4.1 Robert Winfield had received a letter from Charles Donnelly of First Leeds responding to our concerns about recent bus fare increases. Charles Donnelly acknowledged that First are aware that increasing fares works against their plan to attract customers, but, in these difficult times, they had to strike a balance between managing changes in demand and the need to invest for the future. He added that First is committed to providing £11.1 million for some 70 new buses in West Yorkshire in 2009/10, following a £24 million investment in the past 12 months. He acknowledged that they are experiencing a fall in customer numbers due to the recession, and that this has led to the reduction in some services.

4.2 Robert Winfield had received a letter from D M Wilson of the Leeds City Council Highways Department in relation to the Dewsbury Road bus priority measures and the Ring Road Beeston Park bus lane. Mr Wilson forwarded a copy of the latest proposals for this scheme; the main alteration to the layout notified to the Forum in February 2008 being the reduction in the length of the proposed bus lane and subsequent carriageway widening. The proposals also include the signalisation of the Ring Road Beeston Park and Gipsy Lane junction to improve the traffic flows at the location and the introduction of a shared use footway/cycleway between Parkwood Road and Bodmin Road. Mr Wilson attached a map of the location which he stressed would be subject to further consultation, and asked for any comments which we may have on the proposals. Robert Winfield said that he would be happy to show the map to any member of the Forum at the conclusion of the meeting.

4.3 Robert Winfield referred to an e mail from Friends of Middleton Park about the Middleton Park Craft, Flower and Produce Stall which would be taking place on 20th September in the park

4.4 Christine Thornton had received details of a session on Saturday 5th September with Hilary Benn at the Watsonia Centre

4.5 Councillor Angela Gabriel referred to the AGM of the Beeston Festival at Hillside on 9th September, and the AGM of Friends of Cross Flatts Park at the Watsonia at 7 p.m on 22nd September.

5. Report of the Committee meeting held on Thursday 20th August.

5.1 Christine Thornton noted that the meeting had discussed the road changes referred to by Robert Winfield in the section dealing with correspondence. The committee had also discussed feedback from the first meeting at our new venue, which it was felt had gone very well. There was also a discussion about residents car parking in the area, and the proposal to block off Sunnyview Gardens. There had also been a discussion of early plans for the AGM.

5.2 Councillor Angela Gabriel reported progress in relation to the proposal to block off Sunnyview Gardens; she said that letters were going out to residents by way of consultation.

6. Beeston Village Community Centre Committee- Robert Winfield asked whether there are any issues which members wish to raise at the next meeting of the committee, which would take place on 22nd September. Steve Francis said that when walking up from the Co-op side of the building, the

building looks unwelcoming with the shutters down. It is not possible to see anything. He wondered whether the shutters can be drawn up during the meeting as the building would otherwise look dead. Christine Thornton noted that it would be dark at the start of meetings soon and was not prepared to open all the shutters to make the building look nicer.

7. Parish Council Steering Committee- Robert Winfield asked for anyone wishing to join the committee who had not already done so to speak to him.

8. Any Other Business-

8.1 Sandra Burton had seen a notice on spare land close to the former Crescent Cinema saying that something would be opening soon. She wondered what it is. Raymond Nevin said that it would be a manual car wash, and that a planning application for this was described in this evening's Yorkshire Evening Post.

8.2 John Hodgson referred to the proposals to block off Sunnyview Gardens, saying that residents are being consulted in relation to three options; to block it off at the middle, the top and the bottom. He added that he was concerned about an accident which had occurred 2 to 3 weeks ago in which a young person had been knocked down. Wesley Street had been blocked off for around 1 to 1 ½ hours, and asked what provision would be made to deal with any accidents on Wesley Street if Sunnyview Gardens were blocked off. He noted that traffic was being diverted up Sunnyview Gardens, and asked what would happen if there is a similar accident on Wesley Street if Sunnyview Gardens were blocked off. Councillor David Congreve said that the police would have to deal with such a situation. He recalled that he was coming home, and had sought to turn up Wesley Street, but was prevented from doing so by police, and was instead redirected onto the Ring Road. He was unaware that traffic was being directed up Sunnyview Gardens. He presumed that the police must have closed Wesley Street except for access to residents. John Hodgson noted that on several occasions, traffic has piled up on Wesley Street, usually as a result of accidents on the gyratory. On several such occasions, Sunnyview Gardens had served as a safety valve. He feared that an accident on the gyratory would have the effect of snarling up traffic in this area. David Congreve felt that the highways department must answer this point, but added that part of the consultation process revolves around the fact that the Sunnyviews is a dangerous route and there was a considerable amount of rat running. During the three hour peak period , 168 vehicles per hour had been found to be using Sunnyview Gardens. This rat running through a residential area is dangerous. John Hodgson noted that since road humps were installed on Tempest Road, Cross Flatts Avenue had become busier. Prior to that many people had said that it had been possible to lie down in their street without being run over! Now, hundreds of cars were going up Cross Flatts Avenue in a rat run. John Hodgson felt that the Highways Department should look at the area as a whole. One man's rat run is another man's traffic jam.

9. Guest Speaker

9.1 As Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn M.P. had arrived at the meeting, it was decided to move directly to his contribution. Hilary Benn apologised for his late arrival at the meeting; a tree had blown down between Grantham and Newark and brought down a power line. This had delayed his journey to Leeds from a Cabinet meeting at the site of the Olympic Park in London. He thanked the Forum for its invitation and also for the work which the Forum does. He was pleased to have a conversation with a lively body which takes an interest in the local community. We need that to deal with problems and challenges. Hilary Benn added that he would be holding another event at 4 p.m on Saturday 5th September at the Watsonia Pavilion. He thanked the Councillors for Beeston and Holbeck; David Congreve , Angela Gabriel and Adam Ogilvie, saying that they do a fantastic job, and that the area is lucky to have them.

9.2 Before the meeting opens up to comments from the floor, Hilary Benn said that he has two things to say. In relation to the economy, he said that times are tough since a financial gale blew across the Atlantic last year affecting banks. This had led to difficulties for homes, jobs and businesses. We are

now turning the corner and it would be a long hard slog. He said that at the Cabinet meeting, which had taken place earlier in the day, there was a discussion about the steps which the government is taking to inject money into the economy. The government had been right to stop the loss of savings and to stop banks collapsing. He asked when problems come, what do we do? Do we get everything right?. It is difficult to do so, but the issue is either wanting to help or saying that nothing can be done.

9.3 Hilary Benn then referred to local campaigns. He referred to the decision of Leeds City Council to close South Leeds Sports Centre, the proposals for the building of an Ice Rink at Elland Road, and the issue of policing; in which connection Hilary Benn observed that he was glad to see the police present at the meeting. He noted that the government had said that policing is about priorities and targets. He noted that local concerns are car crime and burglary. He said that we should make sure that the police service has priorities just like the NHS and schools do. There should be discussion about what is a sensible target. Hilary Benn said that policing is measured on whether it has the confidence of the local community. This puts responsibilities on members of the local community to give views on local priorities. He noted that as he arrived at the meeting, John Hodgson was speaking about the issue of traffic. He said that the Forum should make sure that its views are expressed. He noted that the Forum has its say as to whether the Policing Pledge is met. He expressed frustration that people just get to know police operating in their area, only to see them move on. He said that having dedicated neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs has made a difference, and there is a structure to help people deal with problems. An essential building block is people feeling safe and secure. He added that he had learned many things as an MP, and before that, in his twenty years as a councillor. He said that people do it best when they do it together.

9.4 The meeting then opened up to contributions from the audience. The following issues were discussed

- rat infestation and fly tipping on a car park close to Elland Road
- there was a lengthy discussion about dentistry and the state of the NHS
- the allocation of green bins to certain households in Beeston
- the role of manufacturing and the government's decision to rescue a number of banks from bankruptcy
- recycling and the fact that certain types of plastic cannot be recycled
- whether energy can be generated by water passing between reservoirs
- post office closures and the perceived underinvestment in Beeston
- the poor state of roads
- the payment of bonuses to bankers
- the use of temporary classrooms at Beeston Primary School
- the implications of globalisation