

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

Secretary: Mr Robert Winfield, 7 Allenby Gardens, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 5RW. Tel 0777 379 7820

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

find us on Facebook at 'Beeston Community Forum'



BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 1st September 2016

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum meeting held on 4th August 2016
4. Guest Speaker- Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn, Member of Parliament for Leeds Central
5. Police Report
6. The Beeston Neighbourhood Plan
7. Report of the Committee meeting held on 11th August 2016
8. The Aspiring Communities Planning application and the reading of the Forum's letter to the Planning Inspectorate
9. Correspondence
10. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 4th August 2016

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair) , Mr. W.J. Birch, Mrs. J. Birch, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, M. Broadbent, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. S. Casserley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. J. Cunningham, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. K. Hewson, Mr. J. Hook, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, D. McGuigan, Mr.S. Sturman, PC C Varley (West Yorkshire Police) and Mr.R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed the members present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance
2. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Bell, Adam Cooper, Steve Francis, Colin Hendrick Ward and Councillor Adam Ogilvie. Additionally, Robert Winfield noted that Myra Munro, who was not present at the meeting had notified him of circumstances which might prevent her attendance. With the permission of the meeting, she was also recorded as presenting apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 7th July 2016 . Bill Birch questioned the accuracy of some of the figures stated in paragraph 9.1 of the minutes . He suspected that the stated figure of £80000 should have read £800000 . Robert Winfield noted that this could easily be explained by a typing error. He undertook to check the figures and make any necessary alterations. Subject to this matter , the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting . There were no matters arising

4. Police Report

4.1 PC Varley from Elland Road Police Station noted that it was his first attendance at a Forum meeting. He explained that he would outline crime figures for the past 30 days in the Beeston Forum area. He noted that he had attended two other meetings but these were district wide for Leeds. He noted that some of the crime figures are quite low compared with other areas.

4.2 With regard to Burglary (Dwelling) (involving theft from homes) there had been four in the past 30 days at Redhall Close, Old Lane, Preston Parade and Oldroyd Crescent. In connection with the incident on Old Lane it was noted that the suspects had gained access to the house through an insecure window, stole the car keys and took the car. There had been one arrest for an incident on 1st August involving a person who is known to the police. He called on members of the public to ensure that windows are on latches as burglars can be quick to gain access

4.3 With regard to Burglary (Other), he noted that there was a theft from Old Lane allotment on 23rd July. This involved thieves entering and stealing gardening equipment and tools. There are no suspects. He added that the more crime is reported, the more likely something is to be flagged up as a problem area. He added that sheds had been targeted on Robb Street and Atha Street. Thieves had targeted gardening tools, snapped a lock off a shed and took items

4.4 There had been twelve thefts from motor vehicles in the past 30 days at Cross Flatts Parade, Barkly Road, the Woolers, Parkfield Grove, Firth Avenue and Dalton Grove. Some of the thefts involved smashed windows, whilst others involved insecure vehicles. Stuart Casserley suspected that someone must have a scanner. PC Varley noted that the thieves had taken wallets, satellite navigation equipment and cash. In one instance, a car stereo had been taken. The police had started to review this as a problem area but a man who had been identified by PCSOs using CCTV had been linked to the Atha Street theft. He was arrested and stolen property was found at his home. He was then charged with two offences and jailed. It is intended to speak to him in prison about the other offences. It is hoped that the number of incidents will be reduced.

4.5 There had been three thefts of motor vehicles in Old Lane, Noster View and Atha Street (this crime was linked to the person arrested and subsequently jailed). There were no robberies and no sexual offences

4.6 PC Varley said that he had brought a number of pieces of equipment intended to deter crime, including a device which alters householders when a door is opened. He noted that the present meeting had been better attended than other meetings which he had attended, so the supplies may run out. If anyone wants any of the equipment, but supplies had been exhausted, he would be happy to take the details and drop them off to the individuals concerned. He noted that he had only brought ix copies of the newsletter. Christine Thornton noted that the attendance at Forum meetings is normally higher than at the present meeting. PC Varley noted that one of the burglaries, on Preston Parade, had involved thieves entering the property through an unlocked door. He added that extra police resources are being brought into this area.

4.7 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Dennis Bottomley noted that in Cross Flatts Grove, Cross Flatts Avenue and Wooler Street, high powered cars with turbo engines are causing a nuisance. Nothing is ever done about this. Screeching tyres and engines can be heard and the 20 mph speed limit is being ignored. The cars travel so fast that he is unable to photograph them with his phone. PC Varley asked whether the same car is involved. Dennis Bottomley noted that a number of cars have been involved. Pauline Johnson added that the cars drive so quickly that it is impossible to record their registration numbers. PC Varley noted that streets in the area are narrow, and added that he covers Beeston, Belle Isle and Middleton. He had an operation set up for speeding, the targeting of uninsured vehicles and the use of improper fuels such as red diesel. He noted that the police have patrolled Dewsbury Road and Old Lane but acknowledged that they must move around to other areas. A colleague has been trained in the use of a speed gun camera which could be used. Dennis Bottomley noted that many children play in the area. PC Varley acknowledged that this is a nightmare. He would want to say that he could resolve the matter but felt unable to do so. Christine Thornton noted that there had been two young men (boys) in Cross Flatts Park. They had been seen by people who were at a meeting in the Watsonian Pavilion on the previous Monday. They had then been seen in the park at a point adjacent to Christine Thornton's garden (which backs on to Cross Flatts Park. She had phoned Parkwatch (not the 101 police number, which she noted is never answered, and has callers hanging on for ages. She does not know whether Parkwatch actually came out and noted that the boy on the rear of the bike was not wearing a crash helmet. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that she had telephoned Parkwatch. The park had been packed on the previous Monday evening when a meeting of Beeston in Bloom was taking place. The bikes were weaving in and out between 5pm and 6pm. Angela Gabriel feared that someone would be killed. She gave the telephone number of Parkwatch; 0113 232 9973. Christine Thornton noted that the other instances of bike riding had occurred in mid afternoon. PC Varley noted that this is a common theme at meetings which he has attended. He recalled one incident in which he was in a marked car whilst someone was riding a mini motorbike on Belle Isle Road. He noted that the best way to deal with problems such as these is to get off road bikers to try and catch the culprits on park land. When the culprits are apprehended, the police can visit their homes and seize the bikes. There is a fine balance involved. If a person falls off a bike when being cashed by the police, issues could arise. He noted that the off road bikers have had to be in Middleton, but he would send them an e mail about Cross Flatts Park and try to get them to go there at 5p.m on a day. They could see what addresses the bikers are going to

4.8 Sean Sturman noted that he runs the Save Our Beeston Facebook Group which has around 4000 members. He questioned the accuracy of the crime statistics given by the police and referred to a specific facebook post by Karl Lines, who said that he had telephoned 999, and had experienced just how failing the police force is. He had seen two stolen cars parked on the streets. The culprits had switched the number plates and made off. The police arrived too late to catch them. The incident had been captured on CCTV. The police had said that someone would be in touch but five days later nothing had happened. PC Varley acknowledged that if

this is actually the case, this is 'pathetic', but he stressed that he was reluctant to comment about the police work of others. He added that he is unaware of the commitments of the officers involved and said that the story might have been exaggerated. Sean Sturman said that people are fed up and no longer bother to telephone the police. PC Varley said that the main problem is theft from motor vehicles. As soon as a culprit is identified, the police are round to his house within 30 minutes. PC Varley added that the crime statistics given at Forum meetings have been taken from the official police system. If people do not report crimes, he cannot raise them at the meetings in which he is involved. He can only work from the information which is available. It is inappropriate for him to comment on the situation which had been described until he has seen the relevant information himself.

4.9 A member of the audience asked whether calls made to the 101 and 999 numbers are automatically logged on a computer. PC Varley said that if a 101 call is made the person taking the call will ask for the name and address of the caller, and the system flags up the telephone number from which the call is made. He noted that when a 999 call is made, the call is often cut off; the caller may, for example terminate the call if he is in danger. The call taker will create an incident log describing what has been said. This determines whether officers are despatched. If the officer reports crime, a crime number will be added and the incident log closed. The member of the audience noted that the person reporting the crime had been given a crime number and told that unless they hear from the police, they can assume that the matter is closed. PC Varley noted that he is currently investigating 11 crimes, and stress that if a crime has been reported to the police it would be included in the crime figures.

5. Beeston Neighbourhood Plan. Robert Winfield noted that the meeting was to have been attended by one or more representatives of the Hyde Park Neighbourhood Forum. Robert Winfield noted that it is useful to make comparisons, and where appropriate learn lessons as to what other neighbourhood forums are doing. However, the individuals involved had not come to the meeting, nor had any explanation been given for their absence. Robert Winfield, however pointed out that they could be invited to the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Forum which will take place on Thursday 8th September; this would be decided by the Neighbourhood Forum Committee which will take place on Monday 8th August. Robert Winfield confirmed that the dates of the two outstanding Neighbourhood Forum meetings have been changed. The meetings will take place on Thursday 8th September and Thursday 24th November. Robert Winfield hoped that as meetings of the Beeston Community Forum had consistently taken place on a Thursday and been well attended, the forthcoming meetings will too be well attended. Robert Winfield added that it is his personal opinion that all future meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum should take place on Thursday. He added that on 25th August, Leeds City Council had offered a collaborative meeting, aimed at helping the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum, which will take place on 25th August. Christine Thornton said that hopefully, the Neighbourhood Forum will get a boost to push it forward as things had come to a bit of a hiatus. Robert Winfield expressed disappointment that although this had been billed as a longer discussion of Neighbourhood planning, this had proved to be a very short discussion.

6. Report of Committee meeting held on 21st July 2016. Robert Winfield reported that the dominant item had been a discussion about Beeston Village Community Centre and in particular the plans by Health for All (Leeds), which leases the building from Leeds City Council to demolish the existing building and replace this by a new, two storey building, which will be better able to fulfil the functions of a community centre. A meeting of the Users Committee for the centre had taken place on 18th July. It was noted that the application to the National Lottery for the necessary funding for the new Community Centre had passed its first two stages. A third stage application needs to be made before November and a decision will be taken within the following six months. Thus, if everything proceeds smoothly with funding, the present community centre would be expected to close in July 2017 and there will then be a period of approximately one year when the redevelopment will take place and alternative premises will need to be found for Forum meetings. Robert Winfield added that a planning application had been submitted for the new community centre. The Forum Committee had resolved to support the application on the basis of a previous Forum resolution supporting, in principle, the plans for a new community centre. Enquiries had already been made of a number of potential temporary venues, namely St Mary's Church and the meeting room at Elland Road police station. Robert Winfield expressed disappointment that Hugh Gaitskell School, which would appear to be an ideal temporary venue, had not responded to a number of e-mails enquiring about the availability of the venue. Councillor Angela Gabriel urged the Forum to persist with its enquiries of Hugh Gaitskell School. She noted that a recent meeting of the Inner South Leeds Community Committee had taken place at the school, but he added that the building is 'a devil' to get into. She would ask a contact to look into this matter. Sean Sturman asked whether St Anthony's Church was under consideration. Robert Winfield noted that St Anthony's Church had effectively been ruled out after he had been informed by the church that their meeting room would only be available on Fridays. Robert Winfield noted that this is hardly the best day of the week on which to hold a meeting and would in any event result in disruption of the arrangement under which Forum meetings take place on a Thursday.

7. Correspondence;-

7.1 Robert Winfield reads a letter from Andrew Hall, the Head of Transport Planning For Leeds City Council. It was noted that Mr Hall had appeared as a guest speaker at a previous Forum meeting in relation to the Elland Road Park and Ride scheme. He thanked the Forum for its invitation to Martin Farrington to attend the Forum meeting on 6th October. He confirmed that Leeds City Council would provide appropriate representation at the meeting but he added that before confirming in Martin's diary, it would be helpful to know what issues which we will be covering on the agenda. Subject to understanding the agenda, he would enlist the support of the relevant officers accordingly. He added that in view of the further development of parking management proposals for the area surrounding Elland Road stadium, he noted that Mr Viridi had explained the position to date and his work to develop options. Mr Hall noted that he has asked the Traffic Engineering section to consider further what approach they take in terms of engagement with local residents and businesses, in the light of our suggestions for a summit of stakeholders or a similar event. Dealing with our concerns about section 106 funding; with regard to public transport infrastructure, he noted that not all the funds have been allocated but the

monies have contributed to the wider benefit of the Elland Road Park and Ride scheme for Beeston and the inner areas, now removing over 550 vehicles per day from roads leading to the city centre. Use of the site is continuing to grow and with the next phase of the works now taking place to improve the overspill area, there will be a further improvement to the quality of the council's Elland Road lands.

In relation to the travel plan, Mr Hall explained that these monies are collected as part of the planning conditions with respect to monitoring the performance of site travel plans associated with the developments concerned and are drawn down as required over the five years post opening period. Mr Hall added that he has noted our concerns about the use of section 106 monies and have made the officers concerned aware of the Forum's views. He added that it is his expectation that the remaining monies will be allocated and spent in due course on schemes and measures in keeping with the basis for their original purpose

(Secretary's Note; As stated at the meeting, I only recognised when I arrived at the meeting that a part of the letter had not printed properly and it was therefore impossible to read that part of the letter at the meeting. The whole of the letter was e mailed to members of the Forum Committee on the evening of the meeting. The section of the letter which I could not read relates to a response to our concerns about section 106 funding. Mr Hall said that with regard to greenspace, the monies have not been allocated at this time but as the listing shows plans for the local area pertinent to the community are being considered. With regard to Highways, Mr Hall noted that a significant proportion of the funds is not yet allocated but that which was spent has been spent on public transport measures to encourage sustainable travel of benefit to the City and the Beeston area)

7.2 A discussion ensued. Christine Thornton felt that Mr Hall had not addressed the issues which he had been asked to address. Bill Birch noted that the whole idea of section 106 payments is to mitigate the impact of a project on people living around it. It is not to use the money to look at how well a project is going or to extend it. Leeds City Council had never attempted to engage with the community about section 106 agreements and how much money is to be raised. It is a shame to use the money from section 106 agreements as it has been used, rather than on Beeston. Rosemary Casserley said that she would like to know about the scheme on Dewsbury Road, which she said, makes no sense. She said that traffic will come around her area. She added that putting cycle paths on a shopping area makes no sense. She added that she feels like getting a red flag and walking ahead of traffic with it. There was no thought for people living here. Leeds City Council has been playing with statistics and spending lots of money. Bill Birch said that the City Council and Highways come up with pet schemes which make no sense. He was particularly critical of the super cycle Highway along Stanningley Road which had cost a large amount of money. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that the city will shortly start consulting about transport, and the Inner South Leeds Community Committee will organise a meeting dealing with transport. She hoped that people will attend this meeting. She added that she will always publicise meetings of the Community Committee, and said that the meeting dealing with transport will take place by the end of September. She will advise us of specific details as soon as a room is booked. She will state the date of the meeting at the next meeting of the Forum, and added that the Inner South Community Committee has a website. Bill Birch suggested cancelling the business at a future Forum meeting so as to allow the Community Committee to deal with its business at a Forum meeting. This would ensure a high attendance when the Community Committee's business is transacted; possibly 40 people, rather than 5 people. Angela Gabriel noted that the community committee covers City and Hunslet, Beeston and Holbeck and Middleton Park wards and thus a wider area than that covered by the Forum. Pauline Johnson noted that the consultation is online, but asked about people with no internet access. Are they disenfranchised? Angela Gabriel said that this is why meetings are held. She added that in a recent consultation in Holbeck 2500 letters had been sent out, but only 30 people attended the associated meeting. Rosemary Casserley noted that she had looked at the South Leeds Community Committee and found that most of the business relates to voting people in, rather than about Highways. Angela Gabriel pointed out that the committee has a workshop followed by a business meeting. The meetings just have outcomes with no full minutes. It is interactive rather than a formal meeting. She noted that the next planned meeting of the Community Committee will take place on 7th September at Hunslet Church. She noted that as the community committee covers three wards the venues of the meetings alternate between the wards.

8. Aspiring Communities Planning Application. Robert Winfield noted that the Planning Inspectorate had decided that the application would be determined by a Public Inquiry and that the deadline for making representations to the inspectorate is 9th September. Christine Thornton said that hopefully this would resolve issues relating to Aspiring Communities. Councillor David Congreve said that the Inspector will determine the planning application unless the Minister decides to call the application in. He acknowledged the he was surprised by the decision to hold a public inquiry, which he noted is normally reserved for major planning applications. He noted that this application is very sensitive and suspected that the decision to hold a public inquiry had been taken to ensure that everyone can see that the Inspector is being fair and thorough. Bill Birch noted that the original letter from Leeds City Council had stated that the application would be determined by an informal hearing. One week afterwards, this had been changed to a public inquiry with no reason given. David Congreve noted that there is no need to give a reason. He could only think that someone in the planning inspectorate or the government had decided that the application is better determined by a Public Inquiry. He noted that the application is very sensitive and thus needs dealing with correctly in an open Forum. He noted that barristers and expensive legal people are likely to be involved. Bill Birch noted that he has no experience of this, although he has significant experience of the planning process (notably with the National Coal Board in relation to open cast mining). He noted that Leeds City Council is opposed to the planning application and wondered whether they would discuss the situation with other opponents. David Congreve said that he is unsure of how Leeds City Council will play this. A member of the audience wondered whether there could be any further appeals. David Congreve said that if anyone is unhappy, they could take the matter to the High Court. Stuart Casserley said that if Aspiring Communities spend all their money on barristers, would they have enough money to carry out the conversion which they envisage? Bill Birch noted that Aspiring Communities had sought a public inquiry and noted that their expenses would be rather high if they bring in a barrister. Arthur Kirby noted that in the paperwork submitted by Aspiring Communities when they appealed to the Planning

Inspectorate , they said that they would call six witnesses who would take two days to give their evidence. They expected that the inquiry would last four days. David Congreve said that this is a legal inquiry, just like a court. Dennis Bottomley wondered whether the planning Inspectorate use the information given by people who had already objected to the application. David Congreve confirmed that they do He added that Leeds City Council's argument will be based on lack of information from the applicant . This is different to most planning issues. Aspiring Communities are likely to argue that they have supplied all the information but Leeds City Council has not determined the planning application. Bill Birch noted that the officers report had recommended that the application be rejected then Aspiring Communities Planning Advisor manoeuvred Leeds City Council into asking for more information . They did not want the application to be turned down. Bill Birch added that if the Inspector cannot see through this , what planet is he on. Bill Birch said that objectors to the application should not be frightened to peak at the inquiry if they give the inspector due notice. However David Congreve pointed out that anyone speaking at the inquiry can be cross examined and should therefore speak carefully. Bill Birch suggested that anyone appearing at the inquiry should write down what they intend to say and read it out. David Congreve said that remarks must be based on planning grounds. He urged the Forum to choose the people who appear on its behalf at the inquiry wisely. Ken Hewson asked whether anyone making a written statement to the inquiry can be cross examined. Bill Birch said that a written statement would just become a part of the inquiry and added that a barrister would want to trip up anyone who he is cross examining. David Congreve urged the Forum not to nominate too many speakers as this can muddy the waters , and possibly cause arguments to collapse .

9. There was no other business