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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Community Forum General Meeting – Thursday 3rd September 2009

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker- Rt. Hon Hilary Benn M.P.
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum on 6th August 2009
5. Correspondence
6. Report of Committee Meeting 20th August 2009
7. Report of Beeston Village Community Centre Steering Committee
8. Beeston Parish Council Steering Committee
9. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 6th August 2009

Attendance:- Mrs C. Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Almond, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mrs. D. Brooke., Mrs. M. Bramley, Mr. K. Burton., Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. V. Cardiss., J.A. Cole., Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. J. Fenton., Mrs. K. Fenton., A. Hepworth, Mr. J. Hodgson, Miss P. Johnson, PCSO K. Johnson, Mr. G. Leathley, Mrs J. Leathley, PCSO R. Manning, Mr. G.M Mason, Mrs M. Mason, Mr Mwanje, Mrs Mwanje, Mr R.G. Nevin, Mrs E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie., Mr. M. Parry, Mr J. Peckham, Mr. F. Swift., Sgt. Wilkinson, Sgt. Whitworth and Mr R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton commented that we have a fairly full agenda. She welcomed the members present to our new venue, and said that she would like to know what members think of it. She had already discovered that the venue has no tea pot, and said that this issue would be sorted out, although tea would be served at the conclusion of the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Congreve, Steve Francis, Councillor Angela Gabriel and Bob Wood

3. Guest Speakers- Christine Thornton introduced our first guest speaker, Alan Jones of the Leeds City Council Fuelsavers team, who made a number of remarks before taking questions from the floor

4 Christine Thornton then introduced the next guest speaker, Emma Rooney of Groundwork (Leeds) who made a number of remarks before answering questions from the floor

5 Christine Thornton introduced the next guest speaker; Pat McGeever, the Director of Health for All (Leeds). She made a number of remarks before answering questions from the floor.

6.1 In view of the presence of a number of Police Officers and PCSOs at the meeting, Christine Thornton asked Sgt. Sarah Whitworth to give brief details of current policing in the area and take a

number of questions from the floor. Sgt. Whitworth pointed out that for the purposes of policing, the area covered by a police station is divided into a number of beat areas. The beat area covering the area served by the Beeston Forum is known as 'Far Beeston', although Sgt. Whitworth acknowledged that that is not how the Forum describes the area. Sgt. Whitworth gave a brief update in relation to the policing pledge, and stressed that there is room to change the priorities should members of the public feel that this is appropriate.

Sgt. Whitworth outlined the policing priorities as below:-

To reduce anti social behaviour on Cardinal Road, Cardinal Square, Waincliffe Terrace and Gipsy Lane on Friday and Saturday evenings between 6pm and 1am

To reduce anti social behaviour on Beggars Hill and Beeston Road on Friday and Saturday evenings between 6pm and 1am.

To reduce anti social behaviour on Cross Flatts Park on Monday to Sunday evenings between 6pm and 1am.

Sgt. Whitworth pointed out that during the last month, there had been no calls in relation to Cross Flatts Park between 6p.m and 1 a.m; which she felt is good. Christine Thornton, however, pointed out that she had called Parkwatch on several occasions. Sgt. Whitworth felt that she should call the police as well. Sgt. Whitworth added that in the area of Beggars Hill and Beeston Road, there had been one call; at 12.50 a.m on 18th July in relation to three drunken men. There had been ten priority calls on the Cardinal Estate in relation to groups of youths. Sgt. Whitworth noted that under the policing pledge, these calls require a response within one hour, and this response time had been achieved. There had been two arrests of people under the age of 18 for public order offences and being drunk and disorderly. Sgt. Whitworth then addressed the issue of crime figures as a whole. Crimes reported in the area include four vehicles broken into, a robbery from a pedal cycle and seventeen burglaries.

Sgt. Whitworth then outlined a test purchase operation, in which a child aged around 13 or 14 entered premises which sell alcohol, to determine whether the stores are willing to sell alcohol to the person. The child entered three stores in Beeston; Spar on Old Lane, and an Off Licence and Bargain Booze; both on Cardinal Road. Each of these stores declined to serve the individual. Sgt. Whitworth added that it is the practice for Trading Standards to do a follow up. If, as in these instances, the stores refused to serve the individual, they would be told that they had passed the test. There have also been a number of other crimes detected. 106 cannabis plants had been seized from an address on Waincliffe Mount. The police are currently seeking to trace the occupant of the property, who has apparently disappeared. There has also been an incident on Dewsbury Road involving another cannabis factory run by Chinese immigrants. Sgt. Whitworth said that if you see anything suspicious and do not know who lives at a property, let the police know.

On 20th July, there was a drugs raid at a property on Cross Flatts Parade following a warrant issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act. £2000 cash and a quantity of class A drugs were located. A 27 year old man and a 23 year old woman were arrested and are currently on bail. It is hoped that the individuals would be charged. The police have also been involved in Operation Staysafe, which had taken place on two Friday nights on the end of June and mid July and was planned to be repeated on 21st August. This involves the Youth Offending Team and Youth Services seeking to divert youths away from possible anti-social behaviour and engaging them in Youth Services work. If youths under the age of 18 are spoken to, why don't their parents know they are out. In these circumstances the Youth Offending Team and Youth Services would undertake follow up visits.

6.2 The session then opened up to questions from the floor. Richard Bell wondered whether the police are simply stopping all children. If that is the case, the police are simply vilifying children. He stressed that he used to be a child, and acknowledged that he had, as a child, sat on the benches outside Tommy Wass's drinking cider but causing no trouble. **When the minutes were presented for approval, Richard Bell criticised this passage and stressed that he did not do this all the time.** Sgt Whitworth said

that the police stop children on a discretionary basis. Richard Bell, however pointed out that he has a 15 year old daughter and would not wish to see the police bringing her home whenever she is out with friends. Sgt. Whitworth said that the police had come across children aged around 8-9 years out at around 10p.m. Sgt. Whitworth said that this is not right. Richard Bell said that children would say who the trouble causers amongst them are. Sgt. Whitworth pointed out that children can be at risk. Victor Cardiss felt that sometimes the presence of a large number of young people can cause stress to vulnerable people who become scared. He felt that young children need supervised activities. Richard Bell asked 'do we lock everyone up?'. Richard Bell explained that children had been playing at the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) close to Hugh Gaitskell school, having climbed over the fence around the facility, which had been locked. Richard Bell asked why it had been locked up. Sgt Whitworth said that she had had a number of conversations with Angela Gabriel about the possibility of setting up a neighbourhood improvement area. She added that youths who had been stopped by the police complain that they have nowhere to go. Richard Bell said that the use of the MUGA had been denied to local youths because of fear of vandalism, and the only vandalism which had occurred is the vandalism of the wall caused by youths climbing over it to gain access to the MUGA. Sgt. Whitworth pointed out that the MUGA must comply with health and safety and other regulations. Bill Birch said that we had been let down over the issue of the MUGA. When De Puy wished to extend, we had felt that this was a good idea. He accused Leeds City Council of going crazy with Health and Safety issues. Richard Bell noted that Hugh Gaitskell School lock up the MUGA. Bill Birch said that we did not want the school to have exclusive use of the MUGA. John Hodgson said that there are three Multi Use Games Areas in the area ; at Holbeck Moor, Cross Flatts Park and the site close to Hugh Gaitskell School. The first two sites are well used, but this area is penalised .

6.3 John Hodgson noted that there had been no mention by Sgt. Whitworth of the Sunnyviews, Wesleys, Heaths and the Heathcrofts, when she was describing crimes in the area. Sgt Whitworth said that this is because there were no crimes there. She added that if anyone is aware of any crimes in that area, they should see her at the end of the meeting.

6.4 Dennis Bottomley referred to problems involving motorcyclists in the area. He said that they go bezzerk for around a fortnight, then the situation goes quiet for a time, before the problem starts again. He wondered whether the same people are involved, or whether the situation arises because people are caught, then others start riding on motorcycles. Sgt Whitworth said that a group gets hold of a bike, rides around with it for around two weeks and are then caught. She added that if the vehicle has no licence or insurance, it is seized. The person would then be dealt with under the Road Traffic Act which means that he would not be able to apply for a licence. Sgt Whitworth said that Holbeck Police Station works with Parkwatch in relation to motorcyclists in Cross Flatts Park. This is felt to be a better deterrent than people on foot. Sgt. Whitworth also noted that the majority of these motorcyclists do not wear helmets. Fred Swift said that he had noticed people riding miniature motorcycles on Cardinal Square.

6.5 Dennis Bottomley asked why no area is provided for people with motorcycles to ride on. Sgt Whitworth wondered whether people would consider this. Adam Ogilvie wondered where such a facility might be located. He noted that Beggars Hill had been suggested as a possible location but wondered whether this would be welcome to local residents. Location was therefore a problem.

6.6 Bill Birch noted that the Bomb Disposal squad had visited Grovehall Parade to deal with a hand grenade which a local resident had been keeping in his wardrobe for around 15 years. Christine Thornton said that a hand grenade had been blown up in Cross Flatts Park.

7. The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 2nd July 2009 were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting. Robert Winfield drew the attention of the meeting to an error in the minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2009. He pointed out that the paragraph relating to the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting had given the wrong date for the previous meeting. The minutes had been approved as a fair and accurate record of the meeting despite this error. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that the date be corrected.

8. Robert Winfield had received two items of correspondence; from Charles Donnelly of First Leeds concerning bus fare increases and from D M Wilson of Leeds City Council Highways Department concerning bus priority measures at the junction between Dewsbury Road and Ring Road Beeston Park. In view of the pressure of time, Robert Winfield would not follow the usual practice of reading the letters but would be happy to show them to any member of the Forum who is interested.

9. Robert Winfield asked anyone who might be interested in serving on the Parish Council Steering Committee to approach him.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 John Hodgson wondered whether there had been any discussion at the previous Committee meeting (which he had been unable to attend due to illness) about plans for an Ice Rink at Elland Road. He felt that this would be a good thing. He added that it was about time that the mess which has existed around the area for the past 15 years was cleared up. An Ice Rink would earn money for Leeds City Council. John Hodgson noted that Councillor Andrew Carter has, in the past, been good at consulting local residents, but wondered where the consultation has been in this instance. There had been no local involvement in the decision making process as far as he is aware. Adam Ogilvie pointed out that he had stressed that the consultation process must involve representatives of Leeds City Council coming to the Beeston Forum. John Hodgson said that as far as he is aware, the deal is done. The Ice Rink, he understood is a key part of the bid for matches in the 2018 Football World Cup coming to Elland Road. He noted that there are also plans to put in a relief road, and wondered what else might affect traffic in the area. Adam Ogilvie said that the Councillors had made that point. Bill Birch felt that we should press for the establishment of a liaison committee. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Bill Birch that we write to Leeds City Council to express our concerns about this issue.

10.2 John Peckham said that he had written to the Electoral Registration Office with an objection to the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Polling Stations in the area and sent a copy to Robert Winfield. He had not received an acknowledgement of his letter. Robert Winfield said that he had sent a letter of objection on behalf of the Forum to the Electoral Registration Office (ERO) but noted that Alex Meek, the Head of the ERO had been on holiday for a substantial part of July. He had also written a separate objection on behalf of Leeds Central Conservatives. Robert Winfield noted that he had only just returned from a holiday, and could not say whether his letters had been acknowledged, but would look into the matter.

10.3 Robert Winfield said that anyone who had not signed the attendance sheet could do so by approaching him at the end of the meeting.