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## **BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM**

### **Beeston Community Forum –General Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

#### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

#### **3. Guest Speakers-**

##### **i) Representatives from International Fun Fairs and Leeds City Council Events**

Department speaking about the Valentine Fair

##### **ii) Representatives of Hadrian Healthcare**

#### **4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

#### **5. Correspondence**

#### **6. Report of Committee Meetings on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2009 and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010**

#### **7. Report of Beeston Village Community Centre Steering Committee**

#### **8. Possible election of Committee members**

#### **9. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Attendance:- C. Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr J. Cunningham, Mr. M. Dominguez, Mr. J. Hodgson, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. R. Kitson, Mr. G. Leathley, Mrs. J. Leathley, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs M.E. Mason, Mrs. E. Newton, Mr. R.G. Nevin, Councillor A. Ogilvie., Mr. M. Parry., Mr. J. Peckham, Mr. F. Swift, Mr. G. Turton, Mr. R.J.W. Winfield and Mr. R. Wood

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting; she noted that it was not a good night and thanked those present for coming in the rain.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Congreve, John Fenton, Kathleen Fenton and Councillor Angela Gabriel.

3. Guest Speakers- Christine Thornton noted that Councillor Andrew Carter, one of our advertised guest speakers was unable to attend as a result of his being present at the switching on ceremony for the Leeds Christmas Illuminations. Additionally, Councillor Ryk Downes, the Chairman of the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority 'Metro' had also presented his apologies. Christine Thornton noted that Robert Winfield had written to

Ryk Downes with details of a number of issues regarding bus services which Forum members feel are important. Christine Thornton introduced the Guest Speakers- Councillor Chris Greaves, the Deputy Chairman of 'Metro', Mr Neil Holt from Metro and Mr Charles Donnelly from First Leeds.

The meeting discussed a wide range of issues including:-

- the level of fares and the possible loss of passengers as a result of high fares
- the practice of First buying out competitors
- accusations of 'dirty tricks' by certain bus companies
- the fact that no bus services operate along Wesley Street, and the withdrawal of the No 54 service
- the possible introduction of 'Quality Contracts'
- the no 1 bus service and the implications of this running through Headingley
- the reliability of bus services on Sunday in Dewsbury Road
- the possible introduction of a trolleybus system and fears that this would be rejected by the government after expenditure had been incurred
- the possible introduction of night buses
- the possible introduction of a Park and Ride scheme at Elland Road. Neil Holt stated that Metro would not apply for this.
- Changes to bus stops in Leeds City Centre
- the provision of bus shelters
- the location of stops for the no 1 service in Leeds City Centre
- smoking in bus shelters

4. 1 Christine Thornton noted that Manny Dominguez, of Communities Against Post Office Closures (CAPOC) , a campaign in which a number of Beeston Forum members had been involved, had approached the Forum seeking the opportunity to make a brief presentation to a Forum meeting about the work of CAPOC. . Manny Dominguez noted that he had received an e mail from Peter Horn, who runs an equivalent organisation in Nottingham, who suggested that the two organisations linked up. He recognised that the CAPOC organisation in Beeston had been particularly effective involving public meetings, the lobbying of Hilary Benn M.P. , and protests outside Post Offices. The issue is whether there should be a link up with similar organisations in Sheffield and Nottingham. Manny Dominguez noted that the recent Communication Workers Union dispute with the Royal Mail had kept post offices in the limelight. Manny Dominguez praised the Forum's role in CAPOC. He also noted that CAPOC currently has a cash balance of £60. Where could this money go? Christine Thornton reminded members that the Forum had donated funds to CAPOC to assist with the production of flyers. Glyn Leathley wondered what the aim of any campaign would be , as the chances of any Post Offices reopening have surely been reduced. Manny Dominguez said that the aim of the campaign was to keep Beeston Post Office open, or alternatively have another Post Office in the area opened. Christine Thornton noted that CAPOC lobbied Leeds City Council about the issue of Post Office Closures.

4.2 Robert Winfield explained that he had received a letter from Councillor Richard Brett, Leader of Leeds City Council which partly refers to the issue of Post Office Closures but also to the issue of residents car parking. Councillor Brett stated that it is the current policy

of the Council that residents do not have to pay to park outside their own homes. It is his understanding that residents involved in such schemes are issued with one parking permit per household, plus one for visitors to use. With regard to Post Offices, Councillor Brett stated that in the Council's discussions with the Post Office, they made it clear that if Leeds City Council wanted to keep a Post Office open, they would need to agree to close another. Councillor Brett added that the Liberal Democrat Group on Leeds City Council is sympathetic to the Forum's case and believes that Post Offices have a clear social dimension and should not be viewed in purely monetary terms.

4.3 Manny Dominguez suggested lobbying Parliament. John Hodgson reminded the meeting of his membership of the Communications Workers Union. He said that it is important to get politicians to realise that the Post Office is a service, not a business. He said that Hilary Benn had followed the party line and had not actively called for Post Offices to be kept open. Richard Bell said that the biggest success is the motivation and organisation of people. However, the campaign had zero effect; the Post Offices closed, and would not reopen. People do not like that but you choose your fights. Robert Winfield referred to the report of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, which, he noted has a Labour Majority. He noted that an article in that morning's Daily Telegraph had quoted the committee's report as saying 'The consultation process appeared to the public as little more than a piece of window dressing for a decision which to all intents and purposes had already been taken'. Robert Winfield noted that, as stated in the last Beeston Forum Annual Report, it is the view of the Committee that any fair consultation process would have resulted in at least some of the Beeston Post Offices remaining open. He suggested that we ask the Post Office why, at least according to Councillor Brett, they are blocking the reopening of Post Offices, and that we should look at ways of increasing the level of Post Office services in a cost effective way. John Hodgson noted that the Beeston Forum supports local issues and suggested that the funds held by CAPOC should be returned to the Forum. Manny Dominguez undertook to report this back to other colleagues involved in CAPOC.

5.1 Christine Thornton explained that as Insp Damien Miller was present at the meeting, she would ask him to make a number of remarks. He offered to deal with any questions from Forum members over tea. The possible relocation of the police station to Elland Road is still rumbling on. Insp. Miller also pointed out that the police are opposed to a park and ride scheme at Elland Road. He referred to the policing pledge, to the local priorities determined as part of the policing pledge, to the police newsletters and to the yellow slips which members of the public are able to complete with their views as to the priorities of the police.

5.2 Insp. Miller addressed the current policing priorities. With regard to the Cardinal and Waincliffe Estates, the problems are ongoing. The police are seeking to work with children, specifically in entertaining children between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November to prevent them lighting fireworks. This event had been well attended and successful, but major Anti Social behaviour problems persist. Insp Miller stressed that the police would, as a last resort take enforcement action, for instance by means of arrests and anti social behaviour orders. With regards to Beggars Hill and Cross Flatts Park, there had been no priority call since August. Insp. Miller acknowledged that this could be due to either of two causes; either people had lost faith or the problems are no longer an issue. He urged Forum members to complete the forms; he would like to change the policing priorities. Some problems take longer than others to resolve but we are getting there. He added that many of the slips which had been completed are too vague. He stressed that the police need to know the nights, the times and the streets on which problems are occurring. He added that crime for the month of October is 12% down on the figure for September. This is a movement in the right direction; however Anti Social behaviour is up by 15% which Insp.

Miller attributed to the darker nights and the run up to bonfire night. There were issues with children congregating and the use of fireworks. Christine Thornton wondered whether there had been any serious incidents. Insp Miller said that this is one of the best years which the police had had. Christine Thornton noted that it had been quite quiet. Insp Miller noted that a number of youth clubs had been opened, and money had been sought from councillors to extend this. He confirmed that there had been no serious fires. He added that the Council clear up bonfires in inappropriate places. Glyn Leathley noted that whereas in previous years, fireworks were being set off in the two weeks leading up to bonfire night, this had not happened this year. Julie Leathley said that 'Mischievous Night' was also quiet. Insp. Miller attributed this to the recession. The police are also taking steps to ensure that fireworks are stored safely.

## 6. Any Other Business-

6.1 Greg Turton recalled that the issue of dentistry in South Leeds had been raised at the September meeting. He noted that a Yorkshire Evening Post article in October had stated that this had been the only area in Leeds which had been failed on quality for new bids for NHS patients. Greg Turton had written to Hilary Benn about the matter; Mr Benn had placed the matter in the hands of the PCT.

6.2 Christine Thornton reminded members that the AGM of the Beeston Forum would take place at 7.30p.m on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

6.3 Christine Thornton and John Hodgson were critical of the decision by the Beeston Village Community Centre Steering Committee to hold an AGM for the Community Centre one hour before the Beeston Forum AGM. The decision was criticised as being unfair to both organisations and unfair to the helpers who prepare the buffet served after the Beeston Forum AGM. Robert Winfield noted that after discussing the matter with Christine Thornton, he had discussed the issue with all but one of the members of the Committee. A clear majority of the members of the Committee, which, however, excluded Christine Thornton and John Hodgson, felt that it would be a good idea to have both meetings on the same evening. Robert Winfield, however, pointed out that he has reservations as to the timing of the Community Centre AGM, on the basis that he doubted whether a meeting starting at 6.30p.m would be well attended. In addition, he felt that the points which had been made by John Hodgson and Christine Thornton, who feared that the Community Centre AGM might overrun into the time set aside for the Beeston Forum AGM. John Hodgson referred to the inaugural AGM of the Beeston Forum, which he recalled had taken a long time. Robert Winfield said that he had raised the points made by John Hodgson and Christine Thornton, as well as his own reservations, with Pat McGeever, the Director of Health for All (Leeds) which leases the Community Centre from Leeds City Council. Christine Thornton said that she would telephone Pat McGeever to raise the reservations which she had expressed. Doris Brooke said that she would be unable to attend the Community Centre AGM as she would be preparing food for the Beeston Forum AGM.