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## **BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM**

### **Beeston Community Forum General Meeting- 5<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

#### **Agenda**

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speakers- Sally Pinder, Asda Stores Limited and Richard Anderson, Anderson Communications**
- 4. The Forum to decide its position in relation to the Asda planning application and , if thought fit , modify its position in relation to the Tesco planning application**
- 5. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2011**
- 6. Correspondence**
- 7. Report of Committee meetings- 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011**
- 8. Guest speakers for the remainder of 2012**
- 9. Beeston Village Community Centre**
- 10. Possible co-options to the Committee**
- 11. Any Other Business**

#### **Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011**

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Almond, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, C. Boshier, Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. J. Cunningham, A.P. Eales, Mr. J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, Mr. J. Hodgson, Mrs. J. Hodgson, PCSO K. Johnson, Miss. P. Johnson, Mrs. D. Kenny, Mr. R. Kitson, Mr. G. Leathley, Mrs. J. Leathley, Mrs. J. Lowe, Mrs. D. Maloney, PCSO Manning, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs. M. Mason, Mrs. E. Newton, Mrs. S. Otley-Hughes, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. A. Pointon, C. Stevens, B. Stevens, Mr. F. Swift, Mrs. N. Watkis, Mr. R.J.W. Winfield, Mrs. D. Wood, Mr. R. Wood

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks-** Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies for absence** were received from John Baron, Kathleen Fenton and John Peckham.
- 3. Guest Speakers**
  - 3.1** Christine Thornton introduced the first guest speaker, Mr Shaun Harvey, Chief Executive of Leeds United FC. Shaun Harvey thanked the Forum for its invitation and noted that there are a few familiar faces in the audience. He said that he would like to answer questions about how Leeds United FC is operating and its effect on the local community and residents. He thanked the community for its support during the recent building work. The development of the East Stand had started; there had been one complaint about the noise around 3 ½ to 4 months ago, but the matter had been resolved quickly. On that basis, Shaun Harvey assumed that the commitment to minimise the amount of inconvenience has been met.

Shaun Harvey said that on the pitch, the form of the football club had been a little bit up and down. He noted that the goalkeeper in the game played by Leeds United on the previous evening had tried to keep things interesting! Elsewhere, Leeds United FC has ambitious plans for the regeneration of the stadium, but these plans must be implemented with the support of local residents. The Leeds United Foundation, a successor to the old community scheme, had been formed. Shaun Harvey noted that Leeds United FC has a wide appeal, with fans all around the world, but he recognised that the club has to get on with its neighbours. He noted that Councillor Angela Gabriel had persuaded Leeds United FC to assist in the clean up of the area around the stadium; he noted that the club had always kept the stadium and the area immediately around it tidy. He noted that it is difficult to control the actions of fans and those attending non football events taking place at the ground, but he pointed out that Leeds United FC do not sell half the things that are dropped on the streets in the area of the stadium. Leeds United FC has increased its financial commitment in connection with the cleaning up of the area. The club would not seek to influence which areas are cleaned up; this is too large an area for Leeds

United FC to be involved.

Shaun Harvey noted that Leeds United FC had the pleasure of drawing Manchester United FC in the Carling Cup. This renewed a rivalry which had not been seen at Elland Road since 2004, and there were umpteen issues with the fans of both clubs, not just in the Elland Road area. Shaun Harvey noted that visiting supporters now use the West Stand; this is opposite the large stand where work is currently taking place. The car park on Fullerton Park which is used by visiting coaches is adjacent to the turnstiles. Previously cars had parked close to Macdonalds. As a result of this change, everything is now in a nice controlled area, which brings big benefits. Shaun Harvey noted that visiting fans are not familiar with residents parking areas. The early signs are that the changes will help the Club. Shaun Harvey noted that the parking facilities in connection with the ground are chargeable, and that many visiting fans look for a safe place to park as close to the stadium as possible. Fencing is erected on Fullerton Park to create a safe area for parked coaches. Leeds United FC is working with planners to create a sympathetic solution. The use of yellow bags, had, Shaun Harvey noted, caused disquiet in the community. Now, these are covered over in matching grey in order to blend with the fences. Shaun Harvey pointed out that the fences are manufactured by Hesco; a Leeds company, and are used by the army. The fences can be deployed and removed quickly.

Shaun Harvey pointed out that new developments in the area, such as the police station and the possible new ice rink, do not involve the club. However, the Leeds United Foundation has ambitions for a headquarters on the land close to Elland Road, and that this might involve an artificial football pitch. If such a facility is set up, people in the area would be encouraged to use the facility and Elland Road would be a focal point for good things in the community.

Shaun Harvey referred to his appearances at the Beeston Forum. He said that he does not wish to come to the Forum to deal with specific issues, but he sees the partnership with the Forum as ongoing.

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions from the floor. Mark Parry asked about car parking, noting that the development of land at Elland Road would reduce the number of parking spaces. He noted that Leeds United FC had made plans to ferry staff into Elland Road by minibus. Mark Parry asked what Leeds United FC planned to do to compensate for the reduction in parking spaces. Shaun Harvey noted that the capacity of the ground would only be going down, not up. The club is likely to see additional people more often. He acknowledged that parking is a problem, and noted that some of the money from the section 106 agreements in connection with the building of the police station would be used in setting up residents' car parking schemes. Leeds United FC is not Shaun Harvey noted that the club is constantly trying to educate fans not to park in residential areas. He added that the scheme operated by First Bus, which involves bringing fans from Leeds City Station, is now widely used again. Shaun Harvey noted that it is intended to reduce the number of onsite parking spaces to 2900. He added that if this is any comfort, this is four times the number of car parking spaces than any new football ground would be allowed, as all plans are now based on the concept of green travel. New stadia in Brighton and Southampton, which, are, admittedly, not located in residential areas, only have 300 parking spaces.

3.3 Bill Birch noted that in the past, there had been double the number of car parking spaces at the ground that there are now, and he said that Leeds City Council would be making a killing by selling Fullerton Park and giving local residents problems in relation to car parking. He said that the concept of Green Transport is wonderful as no one spends any money. Shaun Harvey noted that he has never said that he has never said that car parking is not a problem. He added that it is convenient for fans to come in their own transport. Additionally, Leeds United FC has made a conscious effort for the dates of matches and kick off times to be known in the community. Shaun Harvey stressed that he cannot speak for Leeds City Council, and noted that everyone will have responsibility for whatever development takes place on Fullerton Park. Leeds United FC will, however be the occupier bringing in the greatest number of people. This, Shaun Harvey acknowledged, is Leeds United FC's problem, but he also noted that it is the problem of local residents if they cannot get onto their drives. Bill Birch asked for the support of Leeds United FC for his views about car parking. He noted that the offices close to the White Rose Centre as well as the Leeds General Infirmary and St. James's Hospital all have multi storey car parks, and said that this is a potential solution to the problem of car parking at Elland Road.. We just ant the same number of car parking spaces as there are currently. Shaun Harvey said that he would want as many car parking spaces as possible, but noted that fans will always find a way of coming to the ground. The community always pays the price. Shaun Harvey noted that some of the traffic goes under the motorway bridge into Wortley and Farnley, but the bulk of the traffic is in this area as it is the way out. He acknowledged that we need to achieve quality car parking. Shaun Harvey noted that there is a challenge involving the planning department which would want to make the area look as tidy and attractive as possible. He said that there are likely to be as many objectors to the idea of a multi storey car park as those who appreciate the practical help it could bring. A member of the audience noted that many people who do not wish to pay for car parking park in side streets. Shaun Harvey noted that the car parks are always full regardless of the number of spaces. People may choose to park away and we will end up with one or other problem which will not go away.

3.4 Mark Parry noted that more fans are using buses, and wondered whether this is as a result of any incentive scheme operated by Leeds United FC. Shaun Harvey noted that the buses to the ground re operated by First Bus. Although Leeds United FC encourages fans to use the buses, they do not issue vouchers or anything similar. He noted that many people now walk to the stadium, noting that this is a 20 minute walk from the centre of Leeds. It is, in fact possible that more people walk than use the buses. Sometimes, when there is heavy traffic, it is quicker to walk than to use the bus.

3.5 Amongst other issues raised were the cost of attending matches, why reserve matches are no longer played at Elland Road, the development of the East Stand, the building of the hotel and what would happen to the statue of Billy Bremner.

4. Christine Thornton then introduced the second guest speaker; Graham Riley of First Leeds. He is an Operations Manager at First Leeds's Hunslet Park premises. Christine Thornton noted that we had sent First, and Metro, a letter with a number of questions about

bus operations.

4.1 Graham Riley noted that he is from Halifax, not Leeds and had only worked at Hunslet for the past five months. He is, however, a fan of Leeds United FC!. He has been in the bus industry for a significant amount of time and has held various positions. He agreed that South Leeds has had a raw deal as a result of the use of hybrid vehicles. However, First has been selected as the transport provider to the London Olympics in 2012. 236 new buses will take crowds to the Olympics. When the Olympics have finished, the buses will come to First's North Region, which includes Manchester, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. 40% of the vehicles will come to Yorkshire. The area will get no hybrids. The experience at the Bramley Garage is that hybrid vehicles do not climb hills particularly well, but the new buses are very clean.

Graham Riley addressed the absence of bus services from Wesley Street. He used to work on the yellow school buses taking pupils to Cockburn High School. The buses travelled along Wesley Street. Graham Riley expressed surprise that there are no buses along Wesley Street. He noted that there are currently no plans to operate a bus service along Wesley Street, but that the street is used by many out of service buses. He noted that in previous years, out of service buses take the shortest route to the bus garage. This had led to issues with a number of double deck buses being damaged as result of attempting to take routes involving low bridges. Graham Riley stressed the need to understand the division in the bus industry. 30 years ago, when he first joined the industry, he had worked for the West Yorkshire PTE in Swinegate, and later at Torre Road. In 1986, the bus industry was split up into bus operators, and the PTE, which remained responsible for bus shelters and stops. Graham Riley noted that one of the issues raised in our letter is the absence of a visual display unit from a bus stop in Park Row. He noted that this issue needs to be addressed by the Passenger Transport Authority ('Metro'), and expressed surprise that no representative of the Passenger Transport Authority is present at the meeting. He noted that another concern expressed in the letter is the reduction of subsidies. He noted that many services in this area are commercial; however, some early morning and late night services are subsidised. There is unlikely to be any impact on these services, even if the subsidies are withdrawn, as First would prefer to retain the services in order to have an attractive timetable. However, we can never tell the future. Graham Riley noted that this situation contrasts with Halifax and Huddersfield where about 60% of the services are supported by subsidy.

Graham Riley then addressed the issue of the Dewsbury Road Quality Bus Initiative. He noted that the Government had commissioned the Competition Commission to examine whether bus companies should be given the responsibility for running services in a particular area. A bus company which is given such a responsibility would be required to run a bus service to strict specifications laid down by the Passenger Transport Authority. However, the Competition Commission did not come down in favour of this method of running bus services, and Graham Riley could not say what the plans are in the light of this. He noted that the Dewsbury Road corridor is probably one of the busiest bus routes in Europe. Drivers find the route challenging and take pride in their ability to operate a bus along the route. Graham Riley pointed out that the cheap fare along Headingley Lane is intended for students, many of whom have limited financial means. It is a promotional fare intended to encourage bus use. Graham Riley noted that First would be changing their ticket machines, and that all vehicles would be fitted with the new machines by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. Users of buses would notice little change but the new machines incorporate more sophisticated technology. The technology would be used, in conjunction with the Passenger Transport Authority, to develop something similar to the oyster card in London. It suits First financially to get the new hardware in now. First will work with the Passenger Transport Authority to develop products which will make the payment of fares easier and simpler. Graham Riley noted that he will be required to train each of the 435 bus drivers who work for him (2 hours each).

4.2 The meeting then opened up to questions from the floor. Amongst issues raised are the no1 bus stop in Park Row, Leeds, the lack of bus services on Wesley Street and the running of out of service buses along Wesley Street; the timekeeping of the no 64 service; the bunching of buses along the 1,64 and 74 services; the possibility of resuming the no1 evening bus service to Cottingley; the possibility of operating services on the Cardinal Estate on Sundays; the frequency of the no 74 service on Sundays and an incident involving the abandonment of a bus by the driver in Vicar Lane

4.3 It was agreed that the Robert Winfield would contact Metro to ask why they were not represented at the meeting.

5. The minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

6. Correspondence- Robert Winfield had had an exchange of e mails with Jabbar Khan, who wished to run a car boot sale on the car park close to Elland Road. He felt that this would be a source of revenue and that it would bring people in to the area, who would not only spend money at the car boot sale, but at nearby shops. Robert Winfield noted that the Forum committee had discussed the matter, and there were a number of concerns, including fears that any car boot sale might exacerbate the car parking problem on the Heath Estate. Christine Thornton noted that Mr Khan's e mail included a number of references to what 'we' would do, but there was no clarification as to who, in addition to Mr Khan, would be running any car boot sale. It was agreed that Robert Winfield would write to Mr Khan about these points.

7. Asda Planning Application- Christine Thornton noted that Asda has submitted a planning application under which they would demolish their existing store on Old Lane and build a new store. Robert Winfield noted that as the deadline for comments about the planning application is 18<sup>th</sup> November, this is the only Forum meeting which can consider a response to the planning application. Robert Winfield said he had not been able to look at the papers related to the planning application in anything like the degree of detail which would be necessary to form a judgement as to whether the plans are, or are not in the best interests of residents. Bill Birch also confirmed that he has had no opportunity to study the planning application. Robert Winfield said that in the circumstances, we should put in a holding objection which stated that we are not opposed in principle to the plans, but we would like to study them

in greater detail before taking a position on the plans. This approach was supported by Bill Birch who recalled that in the case of the Tesco planning application, the holding objection which we had submitted was a means of getting Tesco to talk to us. When we were reassured by Tesco in connection with various issues, the objection was withdrawn. Bill Birch added that if we fail to lodge a holding objection, we would never get to the negotiating table and Asda would be able to do what they want. Additionally, if the deadline for comments about the application passes, we would not be able to object. Bill Birch noted that planning law includes a presumption in favour of the developer. Glyn Leathley and Richard Bell noted that the application is an outline planning application, rather than a detailed planning application. Robert Winfield noted that Tesco had praised the Beeston Forum for improving their plans for their proposed store. By failing to put in a holding objection, it is likely that we would lose our ability to influence Asda's plans. It was agreed by 28 votes to nil, with five abstentions, to submit a holding objection. Robert Winfield also suggested that we invite representatives of Asda, and Anderson Communications, which is assisting them in connection with the planning application to the Forum meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012 (this being the next meeting of the Forum to which they could practically be invited considering that the December meeting would be the AGM and guest speakers had been invited to the January meeting). This was agreed.

8. Tesco planning application. It was noted that Robert Winfield had received a letter from Deborah Hayeems of Tesco, pointing out that Tesco have not withdrawn their planning application for a store on Old Lane and remain committed to the building of the store. Robert Winfield clarified that the planning application was to have been considered by the Plans Panel East meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September. However, Council Officers advised that the matter should be removed from the agenda as they had received information which cast doubt as to whether the planning application would comply with national and local planning policy. We have no indication as to when the planning application would be considered. Robert Winfield noted that the Council Officers' decision had been caused by the Colliers Report. John Hodgson noted that there is some discussion as to whether the report includes this area. If it does, would it mean that Asda would not be able to build their new store. This area would again be at the back of the queue. John Hodgson also expressed concerns that the Post Office at Victoria Terrace, Dewsbury Road had closed. It was however noted that this Post Office had simply moved into a nearby store. Robert Winfield had seen correspondence on the Public Access website involving a company acting for Tesco, which seems to specialise in making representations concerning planning applications and a six page letter from Colliers International.

9. Report of Committee meeting on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Christine Thornton noted that the committee had discussed preparations for the AGM, the Asda and Tesco planning applications, and a letter about car insurance which had been forwarded to us by Hilary Benn. Christine Thornton noted that the letter resulted from concerns about insurance premiums which had been aired at the Forum meeting at which Hilary Benn had been present. There was also a discussion about the points to be made in the letter to First Leeds and Metro which had been discussed earlier in the meeting and a discussion about publicity for the meeting.

10. Beeston Village Community Centre. It was noted that the next meeting of the users committee would take place at 2p.m on Tuesday 6th December.

11. Any Other Business.

11.1 Christine Thornton noted that the next Forum meeting would be the AGM at which a seasonal buffet would be served. Residents of Beeston would be welcome to stand for the Committee.

11.2 Doris Kenny raised the issue of the site of Parklees. Would the site be grassed over, temporarily or permanently. Robert Winfield also wondered whether the site of Parklees could be used to provide a more satisfactory route from the road to the Community Centre than the present route, which is very poorly lit. It was agreed that Robert Winfield would raise these issues.

11.3 PCSO Kirsty Johnson explained that there would be a meeting at Elland Road Football Ground at 7.30p.m on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November in connection with the proposed police headquarters. Two organisations had been asked to submit final tenders with a decision being made at the end of January and work starting in June. PCSO Johnson circulated copies of the police newsletter. Christine Thornton wondered whether the police have caught the person responsible for the attack on a young woman in Cross Flatts Park. PCSO Johnson said that the police are still appealing for information.

11.4 Susan Ottley-Hughes asked what action is being taken by Leeds City Council in connection with Stank Hall and Barn which is a grade II listed building and on English Heritage's 'At Risk' register, and which had recently suffered an arson attack. When she moved to Beeston 14 years ago, the building was occupied but it is now an eyesore. It was noted that the building has a 13<sup>th</sup> century timber frame. Leeds City Council had recently secured a second heritage grant and had erected scaffolding, but done nothing. It would make a lovely site for an educational or heritage centre, but is not open to the public. It was agreed that Robert Winfield would raise these issues with Leeds City Council.