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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Community Forum , General Meeting 6th September 2012

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 held on Thursday 2nd August 2012
5. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 28th June 2012
6. Report from the police
7. Correspondence
8. Tesco and Asda Planning Applications
9. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 2nd August 2012

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair) Acting Sgt. M. Bonner (West Yorkshire Police) Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. S. Francis, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. C. Halmshaw, Mrs. S. Halmshaw, Mr. J. Hodgson, Mr. J. Hook, PCSO K. Johnson (West Yorkshire Police) Miss P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs. M. Mason, Miss. E. Newton, Mr. J. Peckham, Mrs. C. Stevens, Mr. F. Swift, Mr. P. Tarrant, Mr. G. Waite, Mrs M. Waite and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton thanked those present for their attendance on a lovely evening.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Birch, Doris Brooke, John Fenton, Kathleen Fenton, Councillor Adam Ogilvie and Greg Turton.
3. Guest Speaker-
 - 3.1 Christine Thornton introduced Tom Smith, the Locality Manager for South and Outer East Leeds. Tom Smith explained that his area covers large parts of Leeds including the City Centre, Morley, Garforth and Micklefield. He explained that he is responsible for street cleaning, the clearance of fly tipping, the emptying of litterbins, the clearing of gulleys and grates, the dog warden service and the enforcement of litter, flytipping and waste in gardens. He noted that he is described as a locality manager and said that the management of Environmental Services had been completely changed. In the past, the manager had been responsible to one council officer. This remains the case but he is now also responsible to local elected members through area committees. His remit is also agreed with the area committees and this arrangement gives more flexibility to change services in local areas. Tom Smith explained that he is looking, with the appropriate area committees, at resources and scheduling. He noted that when members of the public contact Leeds City Council, they are sometimes put through to three or four council departments before getting the correct one.
 - 3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Amongst issues raised were the cleaning of grates and gulleys, the depositing of large items of litter. Tom Smith pointed out that issues can be reported to him in person at Dewsbury Road One Stop Centre, by telephone (0789 127 2747) or by e mail to tom.smith@leeds.gov.uk. Members also raised the cleaning of the garden at Middleton Ring Road, the difficulties caused to street cleaning by parked cars, the

flooding of roads caused by blockages, the effectiveness of Leeds City Council's call centre and the frequency of litter picking.

4. The Police-

4.1 Acting Sgt. Mike Bonner noted that there are a number of different ways of contacting the police, but that these are on the forefront of changing. The 999 number for emergencies is well known, and there is also the 101 number for non-emergencies. He noted that he had circulated a handout to those attending the meeting and pointed out that methods of contacting the police are described on a leaflet which he had attached to the handout. He noted that the ways in which the police can be contacted include social media such as facebook and twitter. These ensure that people know of the good work undertaken by the police. Acting Sgt. Bonner said that the police do not often get the chance to tell people about issues as they are too busy.

4.2 Acting Sgt. Bonner then turned to a number of specific issues. He updated the Forum about drug dealing and problems with Anti Social Behaviour, particularly at Beeston Cemetery. He said that there had been a lot of work done about the problem, which had been looked at in different ways. On some occasions, police go into the area wearing normal police uniform, which serves as a deterrent. Police can also enter the area wearing plain clothes, but members of the public would have no idea that there is a police presence in the area. However, this offers a better chance of catching criminals. The police also try to give local people other things to do; good activities prevent people hanging around an area in a way which makes them vulnerable to bad influences. He noted that PCSO Kirsty Johnson is undertaking work in relation to responsible dog ownership. He noted that dog walkers are out a lot and frequently at unusual times. In fact, it is often dog walkers who find bodies. This is a great way for finding intelligence. Acting Sgt. Bonner referred to the Sports Alive event at South Leeds Stadium and noted that details are included on the leaflet which he had circulated at the meeting.

4.3 Acting Sgt. Bonner noted that the leaflet included information about a male who had engaged in criminal activity on the Waincliffes and Cardinals. He has been put away for five months. He also referred to the Sports Camp Initiative at John Charles Sports Centre between 9.45 a.m and 2p.m on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for three weeks. There are lots of sporting events taking place, and this is free of charge. Anyone wishing to sign up should simply turn up at Hunslet Hawks RLFC. A PCSO, Rachel Hides, works at Cockburn High School to get people who are bored and liable to cause trouble to attend events such as this. She even picks people up to go to the event. The police are looking at persuading people to attend events such as this, or imposing conditions such as attending such events.

4.4 With regard to crime figures, Acting Sgt. Bonner noted that there had been two thefts of motor vehicles, eight thefts from motor vehicles and no robberies. There had been eight burglary dwellings, but a person has been charged with three of these. There have been five burglary (others), but one person has been charged. Acting Sgt. Bonner added that the fact that a person has been put away for five months will have a beneficial effect on crime figures.

4.5 Acting Sgt. Bonner then dealt with local priorities. He noted that these currently include speeding on Gipsy Lane. He noted that the police have a speed indication device which is used as an educational tool by PCSOs. This is intended to make people think twice about speeding. Since the device had been deployed, 32 vehicles have gone through it; none were found to be speeding. Acting Sgt. Bonner said that there may be issues related to the school and asked for the thoughts of Forum members. The second local priority is Anti Social Behaviour and nuisance motor bikes in Cross Flatts Park. He added that there are patrols in Cross Flatts Park for a number of reasons. Christine Thornton noted that there had recently been two people causing mischief in the park, one on the footpath, and the other, who was apparently wearing a mask, going straight along the grass. Acting Sgt. Bonner said that the police have their own biker undertaking patrols and that the police had even received a report of it! Acting Sgt. Bonner added that three stolen motorbikes had been recovered in Beeston and that the PCSOs have ideas as to where the stolen bikes were being stored. One male had been arrested for stealing a bike, as a result of evidence from members of the local community. The police are still looking for another male. Six section 59 warnings had been issued for Anti Social use of a motor bike. If someone who has paid for insurance is linked to Anti Social Behaviour, they are entitled to one warning for the bike and another warning for the driver. If they transgress again, they lose the bike.

4.6 Acting Sgt. Bonner asked whether the Forum wanted to keep the existing local priorities, or possibly add other priorities. Arthur Kirby noted that he lives on Gipsy Lane and that there is frequently speeding close to the junction with Southleigh Road. The box junction is frequently being ignored and Arthur Kirby feared that there would be an accident. A member of the audience noted that the speed bumps in the area are soft ones which do not cause a car to slow down. Acting Sgt. Bonner asked for details of the times at which this speeding is occurring, noting that speeding was previously occurring between 4p.m and 6p.m on Thursdays and Fridays. John Hook noted that he walks his dog down Southleigh Drive, and can hear drivers putting their brakes on. He noted that he had written to Councillor Adam Ogilvie and got an answer from the Council. He noted that Southleigh Drive is a cul de sac and that traffic is quiet. Three or four officers came to the area on a Sunday afternoon and concluded that there were not many cars in the area. Acting Sgt. Bonner asked whether the problems are caused by residents, users of the school or users of the golf course. Arthur Kirby and John Hook felt that this should remain a local policing priority. Acting Sgt. Bonner said that it would be sensible to continue the use of the speed indication

device, and to push this issue with the golf club with a view to persuading them to remove the membership of individuals who are responsible for speeding. Christine Thornton said that there is a problem with boy racers in general, and noted that the cars involved are travelling so fast that it is impossible to record their registration number. Phil Tarrant suggested the installation of a speed hump at the golf club that is so substantial that it gives speeding cars a real jolt. Acting Sgt. Bonner said that there would not be public funding for this. Councillor Angela Gabriel confirmed that this would not be a priority.

4.7 Acting Sgt. Bonner then asked for views about Cross Flatts Park. John Hodgson said that this should remain a local priority; this was agreed.

4.8 Fred Swift referred to motor bikes breaking the speed limit on Cardinal Square. Angela Gabriel said that there is a considerable amount of Anti Social Behaviour close to Mark Macdonalds Butchers on Beeston Road between 7p.m and 12pm . PCSO Kirsty Johnson said that she would organise a leaflet drop.

4.9 John Hodgson noted that the police have lost a court case against Leeds United FC relating to policing on match days. Acting Sgt. Bonner said that an amount of money had been taken from the local budget. There are plans in place to deal with this issue. He noted that the case affects all sports grounds. The costs involved will be absorbed within the whole of the West Yorkshire Police budget. Acting Sgt. Bonner noted that he had changed the way in which the ground was being policed at the start of the last football season. He noted that the club used to pay for the cost of all policing on match days, but at the start of the season this had been altered so that it only applies to the immediate area around the ground. This had resulted in a reduction in crime figures including the numbers of thefts from motor vehicles . He had also looked at staffing issues in conjunction with the Rothwell, City and Morley NPTs. He noted that on Saturday nights, the City NPT is frequently seeking assistance from other areas. However , on match days, other areas are assisting Holbeck NPT. This arrangement has worked, and would be repeated during the next season.

5. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Forum on 28th June 2012. Christine Thornton explained that this matter would be deferred so as to give forum members the opportunity to study the minutes.

6. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Forum on 5th July 2012. The minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

7. Matters arising

7.1 John Hodgson wondered whether there had been any developments in relations to the plans for the former Ice Pak site. Christine Thornton said that there had been no further information following the appearance of Zeb Ahmed at the last meeting of the Forum. .

7.2 Christine Thornton noted that Robert Winfield had brought a number of copies of the petition sheet relating to our petition against the Elland Road Park and Ride Scheme to the meeting.

8. Correspondence- Robert Winfield noted that following the Special General Meeting on 28th June, he had written to Victoria Hinchliff Walker of the Leeds City Council Development Department with the conclusions of the meeting. Robert Winfield had published the letter on the Forum website, and also brought a hard copy of the letter to the meeting, with Forum members with no internet access in mind. Victoria Hinchliff Walker had sent a reply explaining that she has some sympathy with the comments being expressed. She had forwarded the letter to David Newbury and Martin Sellens for information, and to advise of local feeling. Victoria Hinchliff- Walker said that she was advising on a minor point relating to the description of the Tesco site. She explained that at the time of writing, she was trying to rush out the comments and did not have the plans to hand to verify the historical status of the site, hence her referring to the site as a former mill, rather than a jam factory. She added that obviously, any panel report to members would have to report this information accurately (or as accurately as the department's information allows for) ; however this is for context only and does not in any way impact on the consideration of planning merits. Apologies if this caused any offence to Forum members.

Victoria Hinchliff Walker added that to update on the current position of the planning applications, she has requested final comments from Colliers with the hope of getting both applications to Plans Panel in August . She advised that the stance of the Council is still to refuse both applications; however, she is seeking advice on the issue regarding member comments on Dewsbury Road at Development Plans Panel. She noted that she was not in the team at the time so was unaware of what went on. Regardless of the stance that council officers wish to take on the schemes, she could assure us that the feelings of the community will be reported to panel members. Councillor David Congreve noted that the next meeting of Plans Panel (East) will take place on Thursday 9th August , and that the planning applications are not on the agenda. Phil Tarrant said that if both applications went through, there would be a total of 300 car parking places, and the area would effectively be used as a park and ride facility. Angela Gabriel noted that parking would be restricted to two hours, whilst David Congreve pointed out that that the issue is completely separate from the proposed Park and Ride Scheme at Elland Road. John Hodgson noted that the Development Department is again seeking the advice of Colliers International, which , he noted is an unelected body. He added that Colliers seek to Development Committees, but had not attended a meeting of the Beeston Community Forum. He added that people have no right to deprive local residents of cheap food, and that we deserve a

supermarket. He added that Leeds City Council had agreed to the New Inn, which is next to a former supermarket which has been empty for several years, becoming a convenience store. He noted that South Leeds is at the back of the queue and we seem to be becoming a wasteland. Robert Winfield wondered when the development department would realise what everyone who takes a walk along Elland Road knows; that there is no building on the site of the proposed Tesco development. He was also critical of Colliers International, noting that they had not replied to our invitation to them to attend the Special General Meeting on 28th June. He argued that any advice which Colliers International gives to Leeds City Council is devalued by their unwillingness to defend that advice at a public meeting.

9. Christine Thornton explained that she would defer consideration of the Agenda Item dealing with Beeston Village Community Centre and the report of the last two committee meetings.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 A discussion took place about the planning application for an all weather football pitch with eight lighting columns, fencing and changing facilities. Sharon Helmshaw noted that she was amongst twenty residents of Southleigh Drive and Southleigh Grove who had received a letter about the planning application. No one else had received such a letter. A few people had therefore photocopied the letter to distribute it to a wider area. She noted that there is currently a football pitch on the site but noted that the plans envisage a football pitch with 8m fencing around, and 10 m high around the goal posts. There would also be eight floodlights of a height of 15m, and that the site would operate between 8 a.m and 10p.m seven days a week, including bank holidays. She added that the site is close to the boundaries of adjacent properties , and asked whether this is fair to local residents. She also asked who would run the site outside school hours; specifically 5p.m to 10p.m. She pointed out that the Head Teacher of Cockburn High School, Mr David Gurney, had stated that he had consulted all local residents, and that the residents were in agreement with the application. She added that it is highly convenient that the planning application had been submitted in August, during the school holidays, with a deadline of 24th August. David Congreve said that anyone who disagrees with the planning application should object to the planning department. Sharon Helmshaw said that she had done that. She claimed that the Chairman of the Southleigh Residents Association was refusing to get involved in this matter due to his coincident involvement with the school. Angela Gabriel noted that she and Councillor Adam Ogilvie had received e mails about the application and had objected. Angela Gabriel noted that as David Congreve will chair the Plans Panel which will decide on the application, he is precluded from commenting publicly about it. Angela Gabriel added that it is the practice of Leeds City Council to inform the nearest people to the site of a planning application. A member of the audience asked why other people are not informed. Angela Gabriel said that this explains why planning applications are advertised in local newspapers. She added that any objectors would be given information about the progress of the planning application. Arthur Kirby said that although objectors have the opportunity to address the planning committee for three minutes, what can you say in this time? David Congreve said that three minutes is a long time. Angela Gabriel noted that she is never invited to meetings of the Southleigh Residents Association. , nor had David Gurney spoken to her about the planning application. John Hook said that he is a Committee member of the Southleigh Residents Association, and had not been told about the planning application by the Association, although he was one of the local residents to receive the letter from Leeds City Council. Angela Gabriel said that she has written to the Head Teacher of Cockburn High School calling for the consideration of the planning application to be delayed. When a planning application is submitted, a legal process needs to take place. John Hook noted that there are three notices on lamp posts. David Congreve noted that Leeds City Council receives 4500 planning applications, and cannot possibly write letters to every resident of the city describing each one. He added that officially, objectors to a planning application are allowed 21 days to lodge objections. If a decision is taken by officers under delegated powers this deadline is important. The application would however come to the plan panel unless the applicants negotiate about the scheme. Individual letters of objection are likely to be more effective than petitions. Once a decision about a planning application is made, it cannot be rescinded. A member of the audience suspected that David Gurney would be unwilling to attend a meeting of the Beeston Forum; it was however noted that he did attend a Forum meeting as a guest speaker earlier in the year. . Angela Gabriel said that it is the function of a resident's group to object to planning applications such as this and that the Chairman does not rule a residents group. If a committee refused to take up an issue, they could be outvoted by the membership.

10.2 Robert Winfield noted that following of the rejection of the planning application by Bal Newsagents, Dewsbury Road, to sell alcohol for 24 hours per day, Bal had submitted a further planning application which differs from the original application by virtue of its omission of a short period during the early hours of the morning. Robert Winfield had consulted with Christine Thornton and it was agreed that Robert Winfield would lodge an objection on the basis that our reasons for objecting to the original application would apply to the new application. If, however, the Forum was unhappy with the objection, it could be withdrawn. There were no expressions of dissatisfaction with the objection.

10.3 Christine Thornton noted that a new edition of South Leeds Life, dealing specifically with the Middleton Heritage Project , had just been published and copies were available from the top table. It is likely that the next regular issue of South Leeds Life , dealing with South Leeds issues as a whole, would be published in about one month.