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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting- 6th August 2009

Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speakers**
 - i) Pat McGeever- Chief Executive Health for All (Leeds)**
 - ii) Emma Rooney- Groundwork**
 - iii) Alan Jones- Fuelsavers- Leeds City Council**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum on 2nd July 2009**
- 5. Correspondence**
- 6. Report of Committee Meeting 16th July 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 2nd July 2009

Attendance:- Mr W.J. Birch (in the chair in the absence of Christine Thornton), Mr R. Almond, Mrs D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Councillor D. Congreve, PC Cookson, Mr J. Cunningham, PCSO Goulding, Mr. J. Hodgson, Miss P. Johnson, Mr. G. Leathley, Mrs J. Leathley, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs. M. Mason. PC McLoughlin, Mrs E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. J. Peckham, Mr G. Turton and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Bill Birch noted that Christine Thornton is currently on holiday and he is therefore chairing the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Bell, John Fenton, Kathleen Fenton, Councillor Angela Gabriel, Raymond Nevin, Christine Thornton and Bob Wood

3. Guest Speakers

3.1 Bill Birch introduced the first guest speaker, Marcus Thompson who made a number of introductory remarks which were followed by a question and answer session.

3.2 The Second Guest Speaker, Alan Shaw, pointed out that Friends of Middleton Park, of which he is the Secretary was formed in 2003 to promote the park and interest in it. He made a number of brief remarks followed by a question

3.3 Bill Birch introduced the final Guest Speaker, Al Garthwaite of Friends of Cross Flatts Park who made a number of brief remarks which were followed by a question and answer session.

4. The minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday 11th June were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

5. Robert Winfield had received no correspondence meriting reporting to the Forum but explained the correspondence regarding the forthcoming change of venue for Forum meetings. Firstly, he had sent a letter of thanks to St Andrew's Church for hosting Forum meetings since January 2007. Guest Speakers for the balance of the year, had received a

letter explaining the change of venue, and a map of the new venue. The press had also been notified although Robert Winfield pointed out that as a matter of principle, he had not notified the press before thanking St Andrews Church.

6. Report of Committee meeting held on 18th June 2009. Robert Winfield noted that most of the meeting was occupied by two issues; a discussion about the forthcoming change of venue for Forum meetings and a discussion about the Beeston Festival Stall which had been organised several days earlier. It was noted that Christine Thornton had suggested that future stalls might include a tombola with a view to raising money.

7. Review of Polling Stations. Councillor David Congreve pointed out that the Liberal Democrats had introduced proposals which would close five polling stations in the Beeston and Holbeck Ward. He explained that under the proposals, the polling district where polling took place at the former Beeston Library would be split so that voters would need to vote either at St. Mary's Church or Beeston Juniors. He objected to the closure of polling stations as this makes voting more difficult. Elderly people, who are more likely to vote than other age groups, typically cannot walk far. Many people would need to travel ¼ mile more to vote. He added that voters who currently vote at the portable building at the Broadway Hotel, would instead vote at the College of Technology on Westland Road, which, he noted, is on the edge of an industrial site. John Preston described this proposal as ridiculous. Ken Burton added that there is no car parking at the college. David Congreve noted that letters of objection had to be sent in before the end of July. Glyn Leathley pointed out that under the present arrangements for polling stations, there is an area of 100 square yards with three polling stations (the former library, St Anthony's Church and St Mary's Church). He wondered whether this is a waste of money. David Congreve noted that the polling district voting at St Anthony's Church has around 2000 voters, and that the polling district at St Mary's church is itself a recent combination of two polling districts. Beeston Library is not a large polling district, but caters for people who would, under the proposals, have to cross a busy road. Robert Winfield noted that he would be standing against David Congreve at the next Leeds City Council Elections, but is not against him on this issue. He noted that he would celebrate his 45th birthday on the Saturday after the Forum meeting. The portable building at the Broadway had been a polling station for as long as he could remember- around 40 years. The relocation of the polling station to the College of Technology would result in a longer journey to vote for absolutely every voter living in the polling district. Robert Winfield also opposed the abolition of the Beeston Library polling district. John Hodgson agreed that there should be no change to the arrangements for polling stations. He noted that the polling stations which are due to close are on a bus stop. He regretted the fact that the turnout in Leeds City Council elections is less than 40% and said that anything which deters people from voting is bad. It was resolved to lodge an objection to the proposed changes affecting the Beeston Forum area.

8 Police Issues. Bill Birch wondered whether anyone had any issues which they wish to raise with the police. It was noted that the current police priorities include the reduction of Anti Social Behaviour on Cardinal Road, Cardinal Square, Waincliffe Terrace, Gipsy Lane, Beggars Hill and Cross Flatts Park at specified times of the week. Sandra Burton wondered whether the police have any authority over the scrapyards on Barkly Road, which had attracted a number of scrapped taxis, and whether this is illegal. David Congreve confirmed that it is a planning issue, but added that there are problems finding the owner. It was noted that the latest police newsletter had been placed on chairs at the meeting. Whereas the area had suffered 35 burglaries in a month, there had only been 15 burglaries during the period 1st June to 30th June. A conman targeting elderly and vulnerable people by claiming that his car had broken down and asking for money had now been caught and convicted. A PCSO present at the meeting urged members present to complete the yellow slips to describe their own policing priorities. Doris Brooke said that two weeks ago, she went to Netto. On a drive around the back of the store she had seen children with hoods selling drugs. She tried unsuccessfully to get the number of the gold/bronze car involved, but this drove off quickly. The PCSOs promised to pass this to the police teams to increase patrols. Doris Brooke noted that the incident had taken place at 3.30p.m. A PCSO present wondered whether anyone else had noticed drug dealing, and would submit an intelligence report. John Hodgson noted from the minutes of Inner South Leeds Area Committee that the police had started an initiative to put CCTV on Middleton Circus. He wondered whether CCTV could be installed at Beeston Shopping Centre and the library. He noted that lighting had gone and there had been petty vandalism, including broken windows. Councillor Adam Ogilvie pointed out that funding had been given to a youth club meeting at the Old Beeston Library, as the councillors are aware of the problems close to the Co-op. Glyn Leathley expressed concern that prostitution was moving closer and closer to Beeston. It had already crept from Pottery Fields to the top of Tempest Road and he feared that the problem could reach Beeston within 2 years. The PCSOs said that they aim to push the problem of prostitution back to the industrial area of Holbeck. The aim is to get ASBOs for people involved.

9. Post Offices. Robert Winfield was concerned to receive an e-mail from James Dean, Chairman of Communities Against Post Office Closures, attaching a letter from the joint Leaders of Leeds City Council; Councillor Richard Brett and Andrew Carter, which appeared to show that Leeds City Council has no interest in re-opening a number of closed Post Offices. Pauline Johnson noted that the closures had been very inconvenient, and that Peter Standen, who had been the Postmaster of the Beeston Post Office had been unable to find work, and was unable to claim benefit as a result of being self employed. Greg Turton said that Post Offices are at the heart of communities and pointed out that all three Post Offices in Beeston which had closed were profitable and thriving, not loss making. Bill Birch suggested that we should say that we are disappointed as the Council had been long on rhetoric and short on action. He called for Beeston Road Post Office to be reinstated, noting that the building is boarded up, and that the former postmaster is

willing to resume his duties. John Hodgson reminded members of the Forum that he is a member of the Communication Workers Union, and said that it is ironic that Beeston had suffered from the programme. Beeston had suffered hard and deserved to be treated as a special case. We still have an empty Post Office and an unemployed Postmaster and suggested writing to Hilary Benn about this. David Congreve noted that he had spoken about Post Office closures in the Council chamber. He had spoken about the Essex County Council Scheme but this had fallen on deaf ears. Robert Winfield recalled that he had spoken to Councillor Stephen Castle, widely seen as the architect of the scheme at a fringe meeting at the last Conservative Party Conference, and said that he might write to him in a private capacity. John Preston suggested that we make the case for the reinstatement of one Post Office. It was agreed that we would write to Hilary Benn MP and to Councillors Richard Brett, Andrew Carter and Keith Wakefield.

10. Any Other Business- Edna Newton noted that the path running from Old Lane to the former Beeston Library was full of tyres and chopped down trees. Adam Ogilvie pointed out that the councillors had arranged for this to be cleaned two months ago, but noted this is a continuous problem.