

Chair: Christine Thornton, 40 Cross Flatts Avenue, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 7BG. Tel 0113 270 0875

Secretary: Mr Robert Winfield, 7 Allenby Gardens, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 5RW. Tel 0113 271 6985

E mail robert.winfield1@ntlworld.com Forum Website- www.beestonforum.btck.co.uk

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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Community Forum General Meeting- 7th April, 2011

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker- Insp. Damien Miller, West Yorkshire Police
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum on 3rd March 2011
5. Correspondence with Tesco Stores Limited regarding the planning application for a store
6. Other Correspondence
7. Report of Committee meeting on 17th March 2011
8. Possible elections to the committee
9. Any Other Business

PLEASE NOTE THE SPECIAL FORUM MEETING ON THE ALTERNATIVE VOTE REFERENDUM – THURSDAY 14TH APRIL. THE NEXT REGULAR FORUM MEETING WILL BE ON THURSDAY 12TH MAY.

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 3rd March 2011

Attendance:-Christine Thornton (in the chair) , Mr. R. Almond, Mr. W. Birch, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs S. Burton, Sgt. D. Chapman, Mrs. M. Charley, Mrs. S. Coatham, PCSO Cockayne, Mrs. M. Cook, Mrs. S. Gabbott, Mr. E. Galey, Mrs M. Galey, Mrs. S. Gawthorpe, A. Grimwood, Mrs. M. Hobson, Mr. J.Hodgson, Mrs. J. Hodgson, Mrs. B. Jephcott, Miss. P. Johnson, Mrs. D. Kenny, Mrs. C. Kirk, Mr. R. Kitson, Mrs. J. Lowe, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs M. Mason, Mrs. E. Newton, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. J. Peckham, Mrs. D. Robinson, Miss R. Ruddock, Mr. B. Stevens, Ms. C. Stevens, Ms. L. Stevens, Mr. F. Swift, Mrs. N. Watkis and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Bell John Cunningham and Councillor Adam Ogilvie
3. Christine Thornton introduced the first guest speaker; Stewart Robinson of International Fun Fairs . Stewart Robinson thanked the forum for its invitation and noted that he normally appears at the Forum before the Valentine Fair takes place. However, circumstances prevented this on this occasion. There had been no complaints save from one gentlemen who complained about the noise . The organisers of the fair kept in touch with him. There was a question about the £1 entry charge which, Stewart Robinson explained had been introduced several years ago for security reasons.
4. Christine Thornton introduced the second guest speaker; Graham Hollings, the manager of Streetscene. He pointed out that he had read the minutes of the discussion about bin collection which had taken place at the Forum meeting on 6th January. He explained the background to the service which, he noted had recently gone through a reorganisation. There had been an 11 route reduction in terms of the refuse service as part of an attempt to increase productivity following the strike. The return to work agreement stipulated an increase in productivity. There had been some difficulties in certain areas despite the use of a software system which had been tried and

tested throughout the industry. The management had worked with office based staff representatives , and tried to get to grips with issues which had not been identified by the software. He noted that bin men were being paid the same money; the return to work agreement had been based on maintaining salaries. However, workers are required to achieve the stipulated levels of productivity, otherwise they will not earn what they did. He stressed that it is in the interests of the City to provide facilities, including trucks and disposal points, but the new system has not had an easy introduction. He hoped, however, that these issues had been put to bed. He had visited the service centre this morning to ask whether things were going okay. There were one or two small issues, but things had settled down.

5. The meeting then opened up to questions from the floor. Amongst the issues raised are

- bins not being collected from the gardens of elderly people who had arranged for this to happen
- litter, notably close to the Co-op, on Beggars Hill and in the cutting leading to Parkwood Estate
- cleaning of Wesley Street on Elland Road match days
- flytipping and the provision of litter bins

Graham Hollings concluded his contribution by saying that he was aware that he had a hard time and that there are quite a lot of issues to pick up. Christine Thornton noted that the Forum had raised a number of issues but that some hotspots are never sorted. Graham Hollings added that if he is invited to attend a further Forum meeting, he would bring his service manager, Charlotte Richardson, with him. It had not been possible for her to attend the present meeting as there had been too short notice. Christine Thornton suggested that a further appearance could be slotted in later in the year. She thanked Graham Hollings for his attendance on this occasion. Graham Hollings left behind his contact details; telephone 0113 247 8526 e mail graham.hollings@leeds.gov.uk

6 The minutes of the meeting of the Forum on 6th January 2011 were accepted. There were no matters arising.

7. Copies of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Forum on 24th February 2011 were available at the meeting. Christine Thornton explained that she did not propose to go through them in detail but suggested that members of the Forum might wish to take them home for reference. She noted that each of the three guest speakers had confirmed that in their view the minutes are a fair and accurate record of the meeting. Bill Birch noted that he had been unable to be present at the meeting, but noted that it appeared that there had been considerable discussion about traffic but less about noise. Christine Thornton confirmed that the issue of noise had hardly been mentioned , but presumed that the issues of noise and traffic go hand in hand. Bill Birch said that Tesco should be carrying out a proper noise survey together with predictions. Christine Thornton noted that Tesco had said they had been working on figures for the amount of traffic. Bill Birch was concerned that Tesco are not telling us what they are submitting as part of their planning application before actually submitting it, and described this as a democratic deficit. Christine Thornton suggested that the Forum's objection to the Tesco planning application would stand unless and until it is withdrawn. She noted that there is a meeting in St. Anthony's Church hall after the 9.a.m mass on the following Sunday (6th March). Representatives of Tesco would be in attendance.

8. Report of Committee meetings held on 20th January 2011 and 17th February 2011. Christine Thornton noted that the committee had discussed the boiler in Beeston Village Community Centre, which required replacement. The cost of this was £10000. It was decided that, if necessary, the Forum would apply for a grant for this, but in the event, Health for All (Leeds) repaired it. It was noted that there had been a mix up concerning the appearance at the Forum, of Stewart Robinson; however he had of course appeared as a speaker at the present meeting, so this does not matter now! With regards to guest speakers for later in the year these are:-

April- Inspector Damien Miller., West Yorkshire Police

May- Shaun Harvey , Chief Executive , Leeds United FC (subject to LUFC not being involved in the promotion play offs), who will be speaking about the Rod Stewart pop concert taking place at Elland Road football ground on Friday 3rd June, and Simon Flowers , Strategic Leader for Education Integration for Leeds City Council.

July- Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader of Leeds City Council

November- Charles Donnelly of First Leeds- It is also hoped to invite representatives of 'Metro'.

Robert Winfield added that since the Committee meeting had taken place, Rt. Hon Hilary Benn MP had confirmed that he will be attending the meeting on 1st September. It is intended to hold a special meeting dealing

with the referendum about the possible introduction of the Alternative Vote system on 14th April. Christine Thornton noted that the committee had discussed the apparent double booking of the Beeston Village Community Centre by the DAZL dance group on the evening of our AGM; 3rd February. She noted that the matter had been sorted out and that it is likely that that is just a one off. She added that we had agreed to return one of our two sets of keys for Beeston Village Community Centre in order to resolve a shortage of the devices which lower and raise the shutters on the building. The Tesco Special Meeting was discussed. Christine Thornton noted that she had attended the meeting of the Inner South Leeds Area Committee of Leeds City Council on 9th February. The meeting heard a presentation by Dennis Holmes of Leeds City Council, about the future of residential homes. It was noted that Harry Booth House, the only such home left in Beeston, is on the list of potential closures. It was noted that South Leeds Academy had expressed an interest in acquiring South Leeds Sports Centre.

A member of the audience asked about the Parklees building. Christine Thornton was aware that the building had suffered serious vandalism. Councillor David Congreve said that he understood that the building will be demolished, and recollected seeing an e mail about this matter. Christine Thornton said that we would hate to lose the Community Centre and that the Forum would do all it can to prevent this. David Congreve undertook to keep the Forum informed of any developments. John Hodgson wondered whether there had been any update about Harry Booth House; we had lost Beeston Manor and Parklees, and although Sunnyview House had been built, this is a private development. David Congreve said that there had been no decisions about Harry Booth House. Christine Thornton said that we need to keep our eye on the ball.

9. Correspondence

9.1 Robert Winfield reported that he had had an exchange of e mails with Mr Howard Mills, a local resident. He explained that he would not read Mr Mills' original letter and his reply in the interests of expediting the meeting, but said that these would be available for inspection by Forum members after the meeting. Mr Winfield noted that Mr Mills had made a number of points, notably that he objected to the delivery of the Forum newsletters by the local police because this undermines the fight against crime. Robert Winfield added that a number of other points in his letter appear to be based on misapprehensions about the Forum; for example he seemed to believe that the recent Special meeting about Tesco was only open to individuals who had received a copy of the newsletter, and that the Forum is open only to some residents of Beeston but not others. Robert Winfield noted that his reply addressed these points. It was noted that in addition to sending the e mail, Mr Mills had telephoned both Robert Winfield and Christine Thornton. Christine Thornton noted that the letter sought confirmation that a number of comments which she had made in her conversation with Mr Mills were accurate.

9.2 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Mrs Val Milner, a local resident who had not attended the Special Meeting dealing with Tesco as she was unaware of this until she received a copy of our newsletter the day after. She outlined a number of concerns about the Tesco development, notably the volume of traffic along Old Lane, which she said already carries too many vehicles. She pointed out that she lives in a cul de sac off Old Lane and it is already difficult to move safely into the flow of traffic on Old Lane due to vehicles parked at the side of the road and the speed of vehicles. There is a speed limit of 30mph on Old Lane but very few vehicles travel at this speed. When Leeds United have a home game the traffic significantly increases on Old Lane and vehicles prior to kick off and at the end of the game move extremely slowly i.e. nose to tail along Old Lane. In addition cars are parked along the length of Old Lane on both sides of the road for the duration of the match. This applies to Saturday matches and mid week evening matches. She said that whilst a Tesco supermarket would tidy up the area she feels serious consideration should be given to the traffic and the effect this will have on the residents on Old Lane. She noted that there are letters of objection from the Post Office and Dentist on Old Lane, also the Co-op which is at the Beeston Road end of Old Lane. It would, she said, be a great shame if these businesses were to suffer, they have served the area well for many years. Netto on Old Lane has been taken over by Asda and will be trading as an Asda store in the near future. The area is well served with shopping facilities which also include Morrisons in Hunslet and Sainsburys at the White Rose Centre. She has requested that serious consideration be given to the traffic situation from all aspects including the increase in noise levels and pollution.

9.3 The AGM of Friends of Cross Flatts Park would take place on 13th April at 7p.m at the Watsonia Pavilion.

10. The police. Sgt. Darren Chapman confirmed that the police had distributed copies of the Beeston Forum Newsletter. Referring to the concerns raised by Mr Howard Mills, he said that in view of frequent complaints that the police are not seen on the streets, he was surprised to receive a complaint that the police are on the streets.! He noted that the local police work partnership with residents associations and the local authority and he does not see

any issues arising from the distribution of the newsletter by the police. He noted that over the past 12 months, there had been a 12% reduction in crime. Theft of motor vehicles had fallen by 20%. The only type of crime which had not fallen significantly is that of theft from motor vehicles which had fallen by only 6%. Most of these crimes had taken place on match days, and Sgt. Chapman advised people not to leave valuables, particularly satellite navigation systems, on show in cars. Sgt Chapman drew attention to the newsletter, copies of which had been left on seats at the meeting. The newsletter describes the result of the Cardinal project, and he pointed out that the police are looking to implement this in other areas. Sgt Chapman stressed that there are no plans to reduce visible policing in this area. There were questions about vandalism at the Old Lane allotments, drug taking on Beggars Hill and the attachment of a device to the Cash machine outside Beeston Co-op. Sgt Chapman urged members of the public to shield their PIN number

11. Hunslet Hawks RLFC. John Hodgson referred to a letter which the Independent Supporters Association for the club were encouraging members of the public to sign and send to Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader of Leeds City Council. The letter notes that Hunslet Hawks have recently won promotion, resulting in a number of games being televised, and consequently, Hunslet Hawks earning revenue. However, Leeds City Council has apparently chosen to increase the rent to be paid by Hunslet Hawks RLFC by the exact amount of the anticipated television revenues. The Supporters Association are arguing that this is unequal treatment by comparison with larger sports clubs such as Leeds United FC and Leeds Rhinos RLFC. John Hodgson said that this situation seems strange and needs explaining. He noted that Hunslet Hawks is a local team with local supporters. He acknowledged that it is possible that the Supporters Association might have misunderstood the situation. A member of the audience said that when Hunslet Hawks moved from Elland Road, there was an agreement with Leeds City Council that additional seating would be installed at John Charles Stadium. The Council did not do this, leading to Hunslet being denied Super League status. Since then, 500 seats had been removed from the upper tier of the stadium. Councillor David Congreve noted that the Council provided the ground but that Hunslet Hawks RLFC is a professional club. He had no knowledge of the details of the lease, but noted that there are a lot of rumours and hearsay. He suggested that the Forum should be aware of the full facts surrounding this situation. Bill Birch said that Hunslet Hawks have been shabbily treated and had been cajoled out of Elland Road on the basis of a promise of extra seats which never came. He suggested that the ground had been built on the wrong site; a piece of land which would have made a better site for the stadium was sold to Waddingtons when they threatened to leave Leeds. John Hodgson noted that Hunslet Hawks would be receiving £5000 from the televising of games; he acknowledged that it is a professional club but added that we are supposed to be encouraging sport. Robert Winfield said that he would be willing to take on board the points made by David Congreve regarding checking our facts. However, whilst he noted that Leeds United FC has been a great friend of the Forum and of the wider community, he was concerned at the apparent inequality of treatment between, on the one hand Hunslet Hawks FC, and on the other hand Leeds United FC and Leeds Rhinos RLFC.

12. Property Prices and Education- A member of the audience who has lived in Beeston all his life noted that the bungalow in which he lives is worth about half the value which it would have if it were located in the north of Leeds. David Congreve noted that this had always been the case. A member of the Forum noted that Leeds is a divided city and that it sticks in her throat to say that she lives in Beeston. The issue is not just litter, but also property which, it was argued, is being let to anyone. A member of the audience noted that a friend had applied for a transfer as her neighbours were 'horrendous'. This was a shame. She said that in the past, if you lived in Old Lane, you were like royalty. Bill Birch said that it had always been the case that property prices in Beeston had been lower. He recalled selling his house in Garforth and buying a property in Beeston for the same price. Now, property prices in Garforth are greater than those in Beeston. He said that council administrations of all parties had failed the area, in relation to secondary schools. People leave the area in order to be educated; this is, he said, rank failure by the council- both officers and councillors. Education Leeds was a disaster. David Congreve criticised Bill Birch's remarks as a disservice to schools. Cockburn, for example, is a good school which had achieved tremendous results. The staff work hard and last year it had received a national award as it was in the top 11 most improved schools in the country. John Hodgson noted that a report has been published saying that 20% of pupils at South Leeds Academy and Cockburn are persistent truants. The schools are improving, but it is where you start from.

13. Newsletter- John Peckham congratulated everyone responsible for the newsletter, and thanked the police for distributing it. Referring to the letter from Mr Howard Mills he pointed out that everyone who attends our meetings is a council tax payer. .

