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## BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

### Beeston Community Forum , General Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012

#### AGENDA

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speakers Gerald Jennings and James Pitt, South Leeds Investment Partnership
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2012
5. Correspondence
6. Report of Committee meeting - 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012
7. Tesco and Asda Planning Applications
8. Police Report
9. Beeston Forum AGM- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012
- 10 . Any Other Business (including, if time permits, Beeston Village Community Centre)

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Almond, P. Atkinson, Mr. Bahra, Mrs. Bahra, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. D. Bottomley, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. R. Casseley, Mrs. R. Casserley, Councillor D. Congreve, Mrs. M. Cook, Mr. D. Corsey, Mr. N. Crowther, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mr. J. Fenton, Mr. S. Francis, M. Hobson, Mr. J. Hodgson, P. Hodgson, Mr. C. Hogan, Mr. J. Hook, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mr. E. Leathem. Mr. J. Lee, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs. M. Mason, Miss. E. Newton, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. A. Pointon, Mrs. C. Stevens, Mr. F. Swift, Mr. G. Turton, Mr.C. West and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and explained that we were waiting for Inspector Paul Akerman, who was due to be the guest speaker for the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Birch, Kathleen Fenton, Councillor Angela Gabriel, Councillor Adam Ogilvie and John Peckham

3. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012

3.1 Mary Mason pointed out that the reference to 'tea pot' in paragraph 12.2 of the minutes , should read 'kettle'

3.2 Mick Mason noted the he had asked Hilary Benn a question about immigration, but that there was no reference to this in the minutes. Robert Winfield pointed out that the details of the question and answer session involving the guest speaker , are compressed somewhat for the minutes of the meeting; otherwise the minutes would be of a length which would generally be regarded as excessively lengthy. Mick Mason felt that nevertheless, the details of the relevant exchange should have been included in the minutes.

Subject to these issues, the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Sandra Burton noted that Bal newsagents is now open until 2 a.m on Fridays and Saturdays, but not on Sundays.

4.2 Roy Casserley pointed out that the Councillors have not revered to him in relation to the gardens at Ring Road Beeston Park. Christine Thornton pointed out that Councillor Angela Gabriel had recently suffered an accident at home.

5. Correspondence. Robert Winfield pointed out that following the decision of the last meeting, he had sent letters setting out our concerns about the Asda and Tesco planning applications to the Leeds City Council Development Department , and the leaders of the three major political parties on Leeds City Council. He had received a holding reply from Councillor Andrew Carter, the Leader of the Leeds City Council Conservative Group, whilst he had received a response from Councillor Keith Wakefield, the Leader of Leeds City Council, explaining that Councillor Peter Gruen, the Executive Member responsible for Development, would send a substantive response.

6. Report of Committee Meeting- held on September 20<sup>th</sup> , 2012..

Christine Thornton noted that the Committee had discussed developments in relation to Crawford's Fish and Chip Shop. She recalled that Steve Crawford, the co-owner of the shop had approached the Forum to express concerns about parking in the area of the shop and its effect on deliveries to the shop. It was noted that Arthur Kirby had seen Mr and Mrs Crawford and the hairdresser who runs an adjacent shop. The meeting noted proposals from the Leeds City Council Highways Department in relation to restrictions on waiting times outside the various businesses in the vicinity of Crawfords Fish and Chip shops. It was noted that following consultation , the Highways Department had changed the proposed waiting time outside Bal's Newsagents to half an hour, to be in line with Crawford's Fish and Chip shop. The meeting had also discussed a draft constitutional amendment which would be discussed at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee had also looked at the text of letters which would be sent to the Leeds City Council Development Department and the leaders of the major political parties on Leeds City Council . There was also a discussion about plans for the proposed Elland Road Park and Ride scheme , and issues relating to Beeston Village Community Centre

7. Asda and Tesco planning applications.

7.1 Councillor David Congreve pointed out that the applications will not be going to the October planning meetings as a result of a change in the structure of the planning panels as a result of a number of large planning applications which affect the city on a strategic basis, and changes to national planning law. As a result of this, it had been decided to establish a strategic panel dealing with large applications as well as those in the city centre. There would be a new West and South Plans Panel which would deal with planning applications for Rothwell, Morley and the South of Leeds. Thus, the Asda and Tesco planning applications would be dealt with by the new West and South Panel. A new North and East panel would deal with planning applications in the north of the city and the remainder of the area formerly dealt with by Plans Panel East. David Congreve said that it is likely that the Asda and Tesco planning applications would go to the new South and West panel in December. David Congreve added that he went to an officers briefing for the Chairmen of the plans panels ten days ago. It was noted that planning officers were waiting for written confirmation of some questions of Colliers International. They have not yet got everything in writing. He added that the most important thing when dealing with major planning applications by major developers is to be very careful. Where consents do not go the way of a developer, the developer has a right of appeal . A developer could request a judicial review, or even a public inquiry which would involve barristers and expensive planning professionals. Councillors must be careful of their position in order to avoid such costs. He noted that in the case of the Asda and Tesco planning applications, things seem to have dragged on, but he noted that many major planning applications go on for a number of years due to intricate policy issues.

7.2 There were a number of comments and questions from the floor. Richard Bell wondered who makes decisions about planning applications and in particular whether they are taken by elected representatives. David Congreve pointed out that the decision would be taken by the elected members serving on the new South and West Plans Panel based on the information put before them. He added that the Councillors must listen to advice. Richard Bell asked whether the councillors would be bound to accept the advice from planning officers. If they are bound to accept such advice, the elected members are, in effect, not taking the decision. David Congreve pointed out that any development must conform to planning policies. Members must listen to advice but are not bound to take it. In some circumstances, members may want to overturn a recommendation , but are advised that this is legally impossible. If members overturn a recommendation, they must be fairly certain that they are doing so on proper planning grounds. He added that officers do not always get it right.

7.3 John Hodgson pointed out that the Colliers International Report had been discussed by a committee which does not include a single councillor representing our area. He added that the former New Inn pub is being converted into a supermarket, whilst the former Grandways site, nearby, is still empty.

7.4 Mick Mason noted that the John Lewis Partnership is coming to Leeds. David Congreve noted that John Lewis will be part of the Eastgate Quarter , which is a major attraction and a huge city centre development. Mick Mason wondered whether the same considerations apply to this, and whether it would be affected by the Colliers International report. David Congreve confirmed that John Lewis would be governed by the same processes and policies as apply to all planning applications. With regard to the Colliers International report, he does not know about the impact of this, noting that the Colliers Report relates to the impact of out of centre developments on the city centre.

7.5 Mick Mason said that he cannot see how Leeds City Market is relevant to Beeston. David Congreve noted that the market is a different shopping experience. He noted that large supermarkets such as Morrisons in Hunslet have an impact on the market. He noted that fresh fruit and vegetables are also sold in the market. He added that John Lewis would only be a leaseholder as part of a development which will bring millions of pounds into the City Centre. Leeds City Centre will agree

to a multi storey car park which will be built near to the present Millgarth Police station. Mick Mason said that Leeds City Council are bending over backwards for certain developments, whilst not doing so for other developments. He noted that when Leeds City Council publish a glossy newspaper, they say that the people want John Lewis, but he noted that the people want a supermarket. David Congreve said that Mick Mason's point is flawed; the city must develop and attract people to the city to shop. Two supermarkets in Beeston will not benefit the citizens of Leeds at all. It is questionable whether they would benefit the people of Beeston.

7.6 John Hodgson said that it is important for local people to have access to cheap food and that John Lewis would do nothing for the 56% of the Leeds population who are deprived. He asked why we are being blocked. If it is possible to open a supermarket in a pub, where is the grand plan.

7.7 Greg Turton proposed that we ask the local ward councillors to go away and find out when the applications would be dealt with. David Congreve said that there would be no need for such a resolution as he could let Forum members know of developments at meetings, as he has done today and at recent meetings. Robert Winfield said that he would post copies of his recent letters about the planning applications on the Forum website. Christine Thornton noted that the letters deal with all the issues including the Colliers International Report and the delays. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that a letter about this matter be sent to the Chief Executive of Leeds City Council.

8. Beeston Village Community Centre. Robert Winfield gave a report of the Beeston Village Community Centre Users Group meeting which had taken place on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September. Robert Winfield noted that Brian Pine, the facilities Manager of Health for All (Leeds), had stated that the boiler in the building had been condemned, and that a new boiler would be fitted over the following weekend. It was clear that a new boiler has indeed been fitted. Brian Pine added that he was looking to buy a number of light aluminium tables at a cost of £290 each. These could be carried and handled more easily than the existing tables. The cost means that Brian Pine would require the authority of Pat McGeevor, the Director of Health for All (Leeds) to purchase the tables. Brian Pine also referred to the need to get rid of the unsightly unit at the left (when viewed from the top table) of the hall. He said that the items stored in the unit would be disposed of unless they are removed by their owner. Robert Winfield noted that the issue regarding the tea pot used by the Beeston Forum (which had been locked in a cupboard, so preventing its use by the Forum) had been resolved.

Robert Winfield then referred to two issues which would give rise to serious concerns. First, flies had entered the building as a result of the storage of large amounts of food (some of which had a used by date of 2011) in the kitchen. John Hardy had thrown away large amounts of food. Brian Pine stressed that he would not wish to see an instance of food poisoning as a result of food being prepared in the building. In the event of that happening, he felt he would have to close the building, or face a situation in which a decision to close the building would be taken by others. Brian Pine had also said that he is unhappy with the hot water boiler in the centre, which in his view could catch fire if it is left on with a low water level.

Christine Thornton recalled that she had complained about a number of matters, including the state of the kitchen, which had previously been piled high with dirty pots. She was pleased that these complaints had been taken seriously, and noted that lots of groups use the centre, including the Youth Service and a number of groups serviced by Health for All (Leeds).

9. Elland Road Park and Ride Scheme.

9.1 Christine Thornton noted that the Forum had taken a considerable amount of time discussing the Elland Road Park and Ride scheme. She noted that the committee had agreed to make a concerted effort to raise the profile of the issue and of the Beeston Forum's opposition to the scheme. However, several committee members had said that many people are not interested in the issue. She recalled that the Forum had printed a large number of leaflets about the subject, and that a number of committee members had circulated them. The distribution of leaflets had started along Elland Road, then with the Heaths, the area around Wesley Street, then with an area as far south as Theodore Street. Christine Thornton noted that the Forum had decided to launch a petition against the scheme, and that there had been a discussion of the issue at the last Committee meeting. It was felt that it was appropriate to raise the issue at the Forum as the issue is losing momentum and interest. It was felt that the committee cannot lobby alone.

9.2 Mary Mason said that she has frequently walked down Elland Road where the bridge is, and noted that a new path is being laid into the proposed park and ride site. Greg Turton suggested that we should petition people in cluster areas where people gather, such as the Co-op, and the parade of shops on Elland Road. This would be the real indicator of whether the people want a park and ride scheme. Edna Newton noted that Leeds City Council had proposed the scheme because they owned the land. She noted that the scheme would cost £2 million. She said that a person would not park and ride but not walk into Leeds City Centre. Mick Mason said that the issue should be left in abeyance until it becomes more prominent. Ken Burton said that we should carry on campaigning on the issue. Greg Turton noted that the Council's current view flies in the face of the Halcrow report in 2009. He said that Beeston must not appear to be a soft touch. Mary Mason said that we would lose the car park on match days; however, Christine Thornton noted that the park and ride scheme would be focussed on the working week.

9.3 John Cunningham wondered whether Health for All (Leeds) and the Hamara Centre are involved in the campaign against the Park and Ride scheme. Christine Thornton said that as far as she is aware, they are not involved, but they have not been asked. A proposal that other groups be contacted to ask them about their attitude to the scheme was passed with

one vote against. Mick Mason proposed approaching organisations based in Cottingley, whilst Ken Burton proposed contacting organisations based on the Cardinals. Dennis Bottomley proposed contacting the Southleigh Residents Association. Christine Thornton suggested contacting schools and the local parish church. Greg Turton explained that he was the one member of the Forum who had voted against the resolution which had just been passed because he felt that we should start the campaign, we should carry it on and we should publicise it. Steve Francis said that he would take the issue to the Governing body of Beeston Primary School, of which he is the Chair. Ken Burton suggested an article in South Leeds Life, whilst Robert Winfield suggested issuing a press release to the Yorkshire Evening Post. Ken Burton felt that the park and ride scheme would fail and that Leeds City Council would lose a large amount of money. Greg Turton said that we should determine the locations and dates where we would collect signatures for the petition at the next committee meeting

10. Greg Turton noted that he had been in correspondence with Adam Ogilvie about multi occupancy in this area. He felt that this should be given serious consideration. He said that we need a charter in which landlords and tenants have rights and responsibilities to their property and the community. Adam Ogilvie replied, pointing out that he is unable to give further information as the responsible council officer is on holiday. Christine Thornton wondered whether this council officer should be invited to attend the Forum.

11. Steve Francis noted that he is the Chair of Governors of Beeston Primary School where an OFSTED inspection had taken place last week (Thursday and Friday). This had gone remarkably well – the school had gone from satisfactory to good across the board and was now aiming for outstanding.

12. Joe Lee noted that the police had not turned up to the meeting, as expected. He noted that he is a neighbourhood watch co-ordinator who had left the police service 30 years ago. He noted that there is a proliferation of burglaries. He noted that burglars are opportunists; if they see something which is easy to steal, they are in. He noted that females are accompanying burglars as a distraction. Joe Lee outlined a number of situations which result in burglaries; keys being left in conspicuous places such as on worktops and tables, and visible car keys so that cars can be stolen. He noted that bodily pressure is frequently applied, such as doors being rammed with elbows. He suggested that doors should be replaced if possible or reinforced by fitting a mortice lock or double lock. He noted that CASAC will undertake a survey and if necessary take action to strengthen vulnerable entrance points. He noted that 4 a.m is the prime time for burglaries and that anything making a noise in the house is a good thing, as it makes a burglar believe that a house is occupied. He suggested that plasma TVs must be hidden behind the curtain so that light from the TV does not reflect. Robert Winfield pointed out that the absence of the police from the meeting is unexpected and that they had given no indication as to their inability to attend.

13. A member of the audience referred to rumours that Parklees was being made a site for gipsies. David Congreve said that it would not be. Christine Thornton noted that these rumours had been started as a result of a long list of potential sites being published in the newspapers; it is likely that instead, houses would be built on the Parklees site. David Congreve said that the council had listed every piece of land that it owns. Many are not suitable for gipsy sites.

14. Chris West noted that he is a new attender at the Forum and wondered whether there had been any developments in relation to the proposed all weather football pitch at Cockburn. It was noted that Cockburn had resubmitted plans for this. Rosemary Casserley said that the link from the Leeds City Council website which is meant to go to the plans does not do so.

15. Robert Winfield reminded members present to sign the attendance list in order to ensure that minutes are accurate in relation to those attending the meeting.

16. Dennis Bottomley noted that the light from the lighting column close to the Community Centre is obscured by trees. Roy Casserley suggested that this issue could be raised with Tom Smith; however, Robert Winfield recalled that he had been in discussions with a Council Officer, Mark Atkinson, about the poor lighting near the Community Centre. He suggested that it might be appropriate to revive these discussions.

17. Andrew Pointon referred to the remarks made by Hilary Benn MP about Dewsbury Road Fire Station. He wondered whether it would be appropriate to campaign to keep it open. David Congreve feared that this would be a fete accomplis.. He said that the fire service has had its budget cut by the government. He pointed out, however, that there had been a presentation by fire officers at the last Area Committee meeting. David Congreve noted that they had assured councillors that the response time in Beeston would be faster, and that no one would be put at risk. It is intended to close the Morley and Hunslet fire stations and replace them with a new station between the two sites; perhaps on the Ring Road. The average response time in Beeston would be reduced from its present eight minutes, by perhaps a fraction of a minute. Chris West wondered whether the number of fire officers would be reduced. David Congreve said that the number of officers would be reduced. Chris West asked how that would result in a quicker response. David Congreve said that most fires are not large; that the number of kitchen stove fires and woodland fires is diminishing, and that fire fighters spend a lot of their time unoccupied. Andrew Pointon noted that Hunslet Fire Station specialises in industrial fires, and noted that it is in an area where there is a large number of industrial estates. Where would that expertise go?

18. Mick Mason wondered whether we had an answer to the question about immigration which he had raised with Hilary Benn. He noted that he was annoyed about the omission of the details of this from the minutes. David Congreve noted that this is an issue for Hilary Benn to answer. David Congreve stressed that he had never said that he would be able to provide an answer. Mick Mason requested that his mention of this issue is recorded in the minutes.

