

# **Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Thursday, 29 August 2013**

**Held at: St Oswald Road Community Centre**

Who was there:

Councillor Dawn Alfonso
Councillor Stephen Corral
Councillor Malcolm Unsworth

### **13. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Unsworth was elected as Chair for the meeting.

### **14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Nev and Doreen Turner and from Chris Cronogue.

Apologies for absence also were received from BeActive, who had been invited to the meeting to give feedback on how a grant approved by the Community Meeting had been approved.

### **15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **16. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2013 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the first bullet point of minute 9, "City Warden Service", being amended to refer to the Princes Trust, (not Prices Trust).

### **17. OLDER PERSONS' MONTH**

The Chair drew attention to the events that had been organised for Older Persons' month in the city and the Ward. People from the Ward were encouraged to attend these.

Hetha Copland, Neighbourhood Development Co-ordinator, advised that details of the activities to be held in New Parks Ward in the second part of the month would be finalised shortly. These would be publicised nearer the respective dates.

### **18. HOUSING UPDATE & INTRODUCTION OF NEW HOUSING MANAGER**

Adrian Farmer, the new Area Housing Manager for New Parks, introduced himself to the meeting and explained that he covered four wards. The following points therefore related to the whole area covered:-

- There currently were 68 void properties;
- Repairs to properties had gone well over the last quarter, having reduced by approximately 25 – 30%. This meant that there were now less than 1,400 waiting to be done;

- Work was underway to improve Kerrial Gardens. This included facelifting the maisonettes and improving the gardens;
- Some of the balconies on the Burns flats in Aikman Avenue were being improved;
- Verge hardening was being undertaken in Keble Road and Hopeleigh Close, where the verges previously had been damaged;
- The drying areas in Mossgate were being removed to stop residents dumping items there;
- Security lighting in Swannington Road and Stephenson Drive was being improved;
- An alleyway in Henton Road was being closed off;
- Initiatives to clean bin areas and provide skips to clear areas were being funded from the environmental budget; and
- General issues in the area included the service being received for grounds maintenance. Consultations were being held to try and obtain a better service.

The following points were then made during discussion on this item:-

- Grass was not being picked up after it had been cut, so it blew around; and
- The green space adjoining Crawford Close and Marvin Close was overgrown to the extent that it was dangerous. Although the land was owned by the Council, the residents were tenants of Riverside Housing. The question of who was responsible for maintaining this land had been discussed previously, at which time the Council had accepted responsibility and cleared the area. Adrian Farmer undertook to enquire what maintenance of the area currently should be being done and by whom.

Adrian Farmer invited residents to report any housing issues of which they were aware to the Housing office.

## **19. HOW TO PAY COUNCIL TAX AND HOUSING RENTS FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE WELFARE RIGHTS SCHEME IN APRIL 2013**

Angela Martin, Community Engagement Officer, advised the meeting that full consideration of this item would be deferred, so that it could be considered along with a presentation from Housing officers. In the meantime, a lot of information was available in the Ward on the effects of the recent welfare reforms. Hetha Copland, Neighbourhood Development Co-ordinator, could advise where this information could be found.

The Ward Members reminded the meeting that the Council's offices in the city centre were moving, so it could be easier to use the local Housing office. Housing officers could refer people to the income Management team if needed.

In response to concerns that a significant amount of documentation appeared to be lost at the housing office, Adrian Farmer, (Area Housing Manager for New Parks), explained that documents received at the local office were given back on the day they came in. All documents were scanned on to the Council's computer system, so could easily be accessed. Adrian Farmer agreed to provide receipts for documents received.

## **20. CITY WARDEN**

Caroline Walsh, City Warden, reported that:-

- A lot of work in the last three months had been complaint-led. Patrols were undertaken when possible, but workloads meant that these could be difficult to organise;
- There were no particular trends in the work being reported, but Outwood Close appeared to be a hot-spot for fly tipping;
- The Council's bulky waste collection service was being promoted. This was well used in New Parks Ward;
- Stencils reminding dog owners of the need to clear up dog waste had been put on pavements in the Piper Way / Piper Close / Perth Avenue area;
- Those responsible for flyposting in the Ward had been spoken to and the posters removed;
- The City Wardens were dealing more robustly with people offering cars for sale on the roadside and this was progressing well;
- The next major event in the Ward would be bonfire night. Plans were being put in place to deal with this, (for example, by removing as much material as possible that could be used in fires); and
- The New Parks Extravaganza had been a very successful day, due to the work done by all involved.

The meeting noted that plans to reorganise the City Warden service were being discussed. A meeting was due to be held on 29 August with trade union representatives to discuss matters such as job descriptions. Meetings also would held, (on other dates), with the Director for Planning, Transport and Economic Development and with the Assistant Mayor with responsibility for Neighbourhood Services.

It was noted that there was a significant amount of rubbish in Elsworthy Walk. It was quite overgrown and a lot of rubbish was accumulating there.

On behalf of the meeting, the Chair thanked Caroline Walsh for her work in the Ward.

## **21. POLICE ISSUES UPDATE**

As the Police were not present at the meeting, this item was deferred.

## **22. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET**

### **a) Update on the 2013/14 Ward Community Meeting Budget**

Angela Martin, Community Engagement Officer, introduced herself to the meeting and advised that, before this meeting, grants totalling £3,825 had been approved from the 2013/14 Ward Community Meeting budget. This left £15,705 to be allocated.

### **b) Feedback**

#### **i) Mother of God Parish**

Angela Martin reported that the application for table tennis equipment from the Mother of God Church that had been deferred at a previous meeting had been withdrawn, as the equipment had been funded from other sources. (Minute 46, (Application 6), 26 February 2013 referred.)

#### **ii) Western Park Golf Club**

Angela Martin reported that a grant application had been received from Western Park Golf Club for funding towards the replacement of blinds at the club house. As the membership of this Club came from across the city, the application had been passed to the Council to be funded centrally.

#### **iii) New Parks Youth Centre – Summer Youth Activities**

Samantha Merry from the New Parks Youth Centre circulated photographs of activities that had taken place over the summer with the help of a grant of £500 from the Ward community Budget. (See Application 1 of part (c) below.)

It was noted that funding also had been received from the New Parks Community Panel, the Joint Action Group, the City Council and the NHS. This had enabled a five-week programme of events to take place, which had attracted approximately 140 participants.

Events had included meeting young people from the St Matthews area, with which the New Parks Youth Centre was “twinned”, for a canal trip and go-karting, as well as work with the Accelerate project for young people interested in motorbikes.

The Ward Councillors noted that the shelter by the youth centre appeared to always be full of rubbish. Samantha Merry explained that the young people did try to keep the area clear, but the Centre had been advised that a bin could not be placed in the shelter because of the risk of vandalism. It therefore was suggested that consideration could be given to submitting an application for a Ward Community Grant for a fire-proof bin to place in or near the shelter.

iv) Super Troupers Dance School

Joanne Randall, of the Super Troupers Dance School, explained that the portable mirrors, for which a grant of £500 had been approved, (see Application 2 of part (c) below), had not been bought yet, as funding had also been requested from the Fosse Community Meeting and a decision on this was awaited. A grant of £500 had been received from the New Parks Community Panel and the Mummy Troupers section of the Dance School had raised some funds by staging a show.

The Dance School was community based and aimed to let children have fun while exercising. A Tiny Tots group had now been started on Saturdays, so the ages of children attending the school ranged from 3 to 16. Two of the 16 year-olds were supporting a dance teacher and the other older children provided support where they could.

Most of the children attending and the Mummy Troupers were from New Parks.

In response to questions from the Ward Councillors, it was noted that the mirrors were 6 feet by 4 feet and were made of safety glass. They had wheels with brakes on and it was possible to join the mirrors together. Insurance had been obtained for all of them.

The mirrors could not be transported, so some would be used in New Parks and some in Newfoundpool. The room used in the community centre was a multi-functional room, so it was not possible to fix the mirrors to the wall. Also, as it was a Council building, the Dance School would be liable for the mirrors if they fixed them to a wall. However, there was another group that used the community centre that could benefit from using the mirrors, so it was hoped that the Dance School could work with them.

v) Mural Magic

Linda Harding explained that this project was to paint a mural for the pre-school group.

The school holidays had been used to try and obtain funding for the paint from Dulux, but unfortunately, although the application met the criteria, it had been unsuccessful, due to the volume of applications received. Approximately £250 therefore was needed to enable Weathershield heavy duty emulsion to be bought.

Consideration was being given to applying to Near Neighbours for funding for the paint, but in the meantime, a group of parents would be established to plan the project and develop the mural.

It was noted that Wilkinsons were doing some community development work and could be a possible source of funding. Alternatively, Adrian Farmer, (Housing Manager), suggested that Housing Services could approach local suppliers to see if they could provide paint, or see if there was surplus paint available from other projects.

**c) Grant Applications Agreed under the Fast Track Procedure**

The following decisions taken under the Fast Track Procedure were noted:

**Application 1 – New Parks Youth Centre, Summer Youth Activities**

A grant of £500 was approved to Samantha Merry towards a 5 week summer programme for young people aged 13 – 19 years old.

**Application 2 – Dance**

A grant of £500 was approved to Super Troupers Dance School towards the purchase of portable mirrors.

**d) Grant Applications for Consideration**

**Application 3 – FC Britannia**

The meeting considered an application for £1,350 towards various costs associated with football matches, first aid, kits, track suits and trophies for FC Britannia.

As it was not clear how many of the people involved in the club were from the New Parks Ward, it was proposed that a nominal grant to the club should be supported.

AGREED:

That a grant of £100 to Graeme Sutton towards the costs associated with FC Britannia be supported.

**Application 4 – Old and Proud**

AGREED:

That the application from Bill Carr for funding for a coach for use by the Old and Proud Pensioners' Group be deferred, to enable more information to be obtained.

## 23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### a) Highways Issues

Robert Bateman, Team Leader (Highways and Traffic Design), updated the meeting as follows on issues that had previously been discussed, (minute 7, "Update on Highways Issues in the Ward", 29 May 2013 referred):-

- The ditch between the road in Copeland Avenue and the allotments had been adopted, so it could now be cleared. This had been referred to drainage officers to progress;
- The footpath in Copeland Avenue was in poor condition and instructions had been issued for the repair of one area. The condition of the other part was not bad enough to warrant repair work, but would be monitored;
- An order had been issued to repair the pothole outside 1 Stokes Drive. The other potholes in the road were not bad enough to warrant repair work, but they would be monitored;
- Highways Maintenance officers were aware that the surface of Gillman Road kept failing and would try to repair it; and
- Birkenshaw Road would be surface-dressed in 2014, before which the road would be patched.

With regard to future work, Robert Bateman advised that:-

- A proposal for traffic calming in Sandhurst Road was being prepared;
- Requests previously had been made for residents' parking schemes in Lamem Road and Keightley Road, but there were no plans to introduce such a scheme at this time;
- Zig zag markings would be provided in various roads in the Ward; and
- The problem of speeding traffic in Aikman Avenue would be considered, possibly through the introduction of pinch points.

The following points were then made in discussion:-

- There were concerns about speeding traffic in Bonney Road, particularly as there was a school at the bottom of the road. Speed humps had been requested, but it was suggested that the creation of a 20 miles per hour zone could be more cost effective;
- Part of the footway in Samson Road was very uneven. A resident who used a mobility scooter had to go on to the road, but the road was very narrow and had a steep camber, which made it difficult to get past parked vehicles. Ward



Members also noted that delivery lorries for a local store had to drive over the pavement because of the layout of the road;

- Problems with parking on roads in the vicinity of the General Hospital were ongoing. The grass verges became muddy through people parking on them and potholes appeared in winter;
- A resident's drive in Shire Close emerged on a corner. People parked opposite the drive, which obstructed the view for anyone coming out of it; and
- The road surface in New Parks Boulevard had degraded, but was programmed for repair.

AGREED:

That an item on highways issues be included on each agenda for New Parks Community Meetings.

**b) Spitting in the Street**

Residents asked if it was possible to do anything to stop people spitting in the street. In reply, Ward Councillors advised that officers had been contacted and were looking at how this could be dealt with as an offence. This was a particular concern in view of the recent increase in cases of TB in the city.

**c) Children Playing Football in the Street**

Residents reported that there were no signs on Bringhurst Road Open Space forbidding ball games, so children played football there and appeared to target properties in the area during their games.

It was recognised that "no ball games" signs were advisory, and were not legally enforceable, but Adrian Farmer, Area Housing Manager for New Parks, undertook to ensure that the signs were replaced. He also advised that, if any of the people causing a nuisance could be identified as Council tenants, the matter could be pursued through their tenancy agreements.

**d) Publicity for Community Meetings**

As some people were not receiving notifications of Community Meetings, Angela Martin, Community Engagement Officer, offered to review the distribution list and update it where necessary. In addition, Hetha Copland, Neighbourhood Development Co-ordinator, could add those interested to the distribution list for a weekly update of events and issues within the Ward.

**e) Financial Assistance for Health Courses**

John Omara introduced himself to the meeting, explaining that he had previously applied for a Ward Community Grant towards the provision of courses for young people in the Ward to encourage them to take up careers in health care. The

application had not been successful and John Omara asked how he could get support for these courses, which were already showing signs of success.

Angela Martin, Community Engagement Officer, offered to supply Mr Omara with details of how to make a further application for grant aid and to investigate whether the Community Panel would be able to assist him in any way.

**f) Play Area for Marvin Close / Crawford Close**

Lyndsey Peberdy advised that residents had campaigned for many years for a play area to be created between Marvin Close and Crawford Close. Funding had been obtained for this and discussions held with Groundworks, but the company had collapsed and it was not yet known how this would affect projects such as this. Building work had now started on a development in that area, so residents asked if a play area would be provided as part of this.

Ward Members confirmed that the planning permission for the new development did not include provision for play, so a play area could not be provided under it. However, investigations could be made to see if there was anywhere in that area on which play equipment could be erected. Angela Martin, Community Engagement Officer, undertook to look in to this.

**g) Forthcoming Industrial Action by Fire Brigades' Unions**

Councillor Corrall advised the meeting that 78% of the members of fire brigades trades unions had agreed to discontinuous industrial action. Seven days' notice of each strike date would be given, but it appeared that there could be as few as six fire engines covering the county during periods of industrial action. Councillor Corrall therefore urged residents to give particular consideration to home and road safety at these times.

Councillor Corrall reminded residents that the Community Panel had agreed to fund the provision of some smoke detectors. People who did not currently have a smoke detector in their property therefore were invited to contact the Community Panel to see if they were eligible to receive one.

**24. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm