

Eyres Monsell Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

4:00 pm, Thursday, 20 September 2012
Held at: Eyres Monsell Community Centre

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Virginia Cleaver
Councillor Rory Palmer

INFORMATION SHARING – ‘INFORMATION FAIR’ SESSION

The following information stands were sited in the room. Members of the public visited the stands and were given an opportunity to meet Councillors, Council staff and service representatives.

Ward Councillors and General Information	Police Issues
City Wardens	

At the conclusion of this informal session members of the public were invited to take their seats and take part in the formal session of the meeting.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Palmer was elected Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Jean Dutfield and Joan Garrity.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Eyres Monsell Community Meeting held on 21 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record, subject to correcting the spelling of Jean Dutfield's name in the apologies for absence item.

5. COUNCILLORS' COMMUNITY REPORT

Councillor Cleaver reported the following:

- The Sheltered Housing Charter, detailing standards which private landlords were required to adhere to, was to be adopted shortly.
- The success of the recent Goldhills event was welcomed and thanks were extended to the organisers.
- The Forum for Older People was reviewing its Charter and its structure to improve the Council's engagement with older people in the city.
- The Rupert House Friendship Group had held a successful Jubilee Event.
- The area of redundant land at Featherstone Drive, which was formerly an allotment, was being considered for garden use. A proposal to plant an orchard and the installation of raised planted beds had been put forward.
- It was reported that despite significant publicity a large number of places on various Adult Learning courses were not being taken up. Details of the types of courses available and enrolment details were made available.
- Memory Clinics were to be held at the Community Centre which would give advice and support to people suffering with dementia. Residents were encouraged to attend the clinics to learn about the problems of dementia and the support available to sufferers and carers.
- The Catch 22 police initiative was continuing to reduce anti-social behaviour and in liaison with Voluntary Action Leicester funds had been received to continue this important community work, particularly to reduce drug misuse and increase engagement with young people.

Councillor Palmer reported the following:

- The Annual Horticultural and Craft Show had been successful and the organisers were congratulated, particularly as the event had continued to improve year on year.
- The Management Group concerned with the Linwood/Aylestone Football Club site had asked for representation and Councillor Palmer had been pleased to accept.
- The Saffron Acres Open Day had been a good event, and the publicity concerning the 'Blaby' tomato variety had been of great interest.
- The recent Advice Fair had been a success with a number of service providers attending, giving information and details of their services. Further similar events would be organised.
- Welcome news had been received concerning an Eyres Monsell School which had received an improved Ofsted report and grading, bringing it out of the special measures category.
- Consultation on the A426 Bus Corridor Project had commenced and it was hoped that improved junction arrangements would reduce congestion and improve air quality. Residents were encouraged to become involved in the consultation process.
- The recent flooding of the new play area had caused frustration to parents and the matter was being investigated with a view to remedial works being undertaken to improve drainage.
- The annual Register of Electors canvass was ongoing and residents were urged to ensure that they had registered their right to vote.
- Changes to the Council Tax Benefit arrangements were causing considerable concern to Councillors. It was noted that various groups would no longer receive benefit, or receive reduced benefits, under the Government's proposals. Consultation was ongoing to ensure the best protection for those affected.
- The campaign against the planned closure of the Children's Heart Unit at Glenfield Hospital continued, and had recently included a protest at the House of Commons.
- The celebrations for the London 2012 Olympic Games and the Torch Relay through the city were highlighted and the legacy of the event on the city was welcomed.

The Police, the City Warden and community representatives were invited to give a report on their activities.

Leicestershire Police

Ps Andy Partridge reported on the reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour, particularly around the area of The Exchange. He noted that the increase in provision of youth activities had led to the reduction in incidents.

It was reported that a former resident of the Ward, Paul McGovern, was working as a Prison Officer in the Greater Manchester area and undertook community based

crime prevention work as part of his duties, including work within schools. It was reported that PO McGovern had recently made contact with the Police in the Eyres Monsell area and had offered to undertake crime prevention work within the ward on a voluntary basis, possibly involving Eyres Monsell Primary School. The meeting supported and welcomed this initiative.

In reply to questions and comments continuing problems of quad bikes and mini motorbikes were reported. It was confirmed that the Police had powers of seizure if riders of the vehicles could be identified. The importance of reporting incidents was reiterated.

City Warden

Scott Clarke reported on his recent environmental activities. Problems persisted with cars for sale being advertised on the highway. In respect of local businesses causing litter adjacent to premises, Scott reported on Section 93 powers, whereby the Council could enforce the cleaning of an area, if it could be proven that the owners of premises were acting irresponsibly in respect of their waste management.

Scott also confirmed that a 'messy garden' initiative allowed gardens to be cleared of rubbish, furniture, appliances and other items, and the residents charged for the clear up. This would only be implemented in circumstances where the residents acted irresponsibly and ignored earlier contact asking them to clear gardens.

Community Association

Wayne Natzel, Chair of the Community Association, reported on the Community Association's partnership with the City Council and advised of the type of events which were held at the Community centre, these included lunch clubs and a breakfast bar meeting but he considered that more could activities could be arranged. He advised that lottery funding was being sought which would allow for events and activities to be properly financed and he referred to the stage area and to the sound and lighting available which were available for larger events.

Wayne requested that any suggestions for future community events be forwarded to him for consideration by the Community Association.

In conclusion Wayne commented on the work undertaken to improve the communal garden areas and the meeting agreed that this had been an excellent community payback scheme. Photos of the improvements would be included in a future edition of the Monsell Mail.

The Chair asked for comments arising from the above community reports.

In respect of anti-social behaviour issues the meeting discussed the need for youth provision. It was reported that problems increased when the Magpie Youth Centre was closed and that The Exchange often then attracted young people who would have attended the Youth Centre. It was also noted that the Magpie's opening hours were being reduced. It was suggested that provision of a 'teen-shelter' could reduce

problems. The need to engage with the younger people to find their opinions on suitable provision prior to making provision was highlighted.

The police answered questions concerning enforcement and made comment on the difficulties experienced with the area above the co-operative shop. The access needed for residents of the flats did not allow the police to close off any areas and this allowed for young people to misuse the area. The situation was being monitored but as fewer flats were occupied the problem was continuing.

In discussing the A426 Bus Corridor Project it was agreed that details of the proposed scheme should be made widely available. It was noted that consultation events were due to be held. The principle area of concern was the Aylestone Road/Lutterworth Road/Middleton Street/Wigston Lane junction however no significant improvements seemed to be proposed as part of the project.

The area of around The Exchange had been sold to a new developer who had shown increased interest in improving the area. In reply to a question the process involving enforcement was explained, however it was felt that the new developer had begun to deal with the formal processes before work on the site could commence. The meeting welcomed the encouraging update.

In conclusion, a member of the public raised concern at the lack of provision of play equipment for younger children. It was noted that play equipment was often made unsafe by larger children and subsequently removed, but was not replaced, which led to a lack of provision for children of 'toddler' age. It was confirmed that a programme for replacements would be in place but that equipment was often not installed straight away.

6. PLANNED CHANGES TO THE WARD MEETING

Councillor Palmer gave a presentation which suggested changes to the structure and organisation of future Ward Community Meetings.

Instead of formal meetings in a fixed venue it was suggested that a series of community walkabouts covering every street in the ward over the course of the year would be preferable. All households would be informed and all relevant agencies would be asked to attend to answer questions, hear concerns and pick up work to do including Councillors, Housing Officers, City wardens, Cleansing Services, Highways Officers, Police and any other relevant representation. Residents would not have to attend for the whole walkabout (they could if they wished), but could attend the walkabout on just their own street.

It was reported that the meetings in their current format generally had a good attendance, had a wide range of issues discussed at them and were lively meetings, with people being able to have their say.

Councillor Palmer expressed a view that Meetings were sometimes too formal with presentations from the front and then questions and that whilst attendance had been good, it was from a very low proportion of the population living in the area. He felt it

was wrong to assume that just because people did not turn up they were not interested in their local community.

The timing of meetings was also considered to be an issue, together with venues. Councillor Palmer felt that the idea of a “meeting” could also be detrimental as some people wanted to be involved in community issues but did not want to attend a formal meeting.

It was proposed that a report and action list could be produced and published (like meeting minutes) after each walkabout and that progress on previous issues would be reported.

It was noted that Housing Officers already do patch walks and discussions on how the community walkabouts could link to those patch walks were being held.

It was considered that people would see the walkabout and take part which would involve more people and reach more people in the community.

In respect of the Ward Community Budget applications it was suggested that these would still be transparent and that decisions would be reported back to the community. A more organised system was proposed with funding application deadlines through the year being agreed and Councillor’s Budget Meetings being convened which would be formally minuted and reported back to the community.

A proposal to allocate the budget to different areas of activity based on the funding bids approved since 2008/09 was submitted. From the £18,000 annual budget it was proposed that £2,500 would be required for community meeting/walkabout communication. The remaining £15,500 would be allocated proportionally to the following categories:

- Community events
- Community safety and crime prevention
- Children and youth projects
- Older people projects
- Other/miscellaneous

Councillor Palmer asked for questions and comments on the proposed changes to the structure an organisation of Ward Community Meetings.

The meeting discussed the ideas within the presentation and expressed support for a move away from formal meetings with a top table. In discussing the walkabout it was considered vital that to the work of other agencies would be necessary to avoid duplication.

In discussing the recording of decisions made, it was confirmed that formal minutes would not be prepared following the walkabouts. An action sheet detailing the problems encountered, actions required, estimated timescales for completion, and lead Officers/Agencies would be drawn up during the walkabout.

In conclusion of the item the meeting discussed the role of the Monsell Mail. It was considered that the publication would have a vital role in promoting the walkabout initiative, reporting on findings and updating on actions. The present editorial policies were discussed and it was noted that items could be included if received within sufficient time. In respect of the proof-reading and in reply to a particular view expressed, it was noted that the publication relied on volunteers and that a remarkable outcome was achieved having regard to the resources available. The editorial team were congratulated on their continuing efforts. It was noted that anyone who felt they could assist would be welcome to become involved.

Councillor Palmer was thanked for his presentation and it was agreed that the initiative be supported. The next agreed 'meeting' would therefore not be convened as a meeting, in favour of a 'Community Walkabout'.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6:00 pm.