

Aylestone Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Wednesday, 17 September 2008

**Held at: Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre, Knighton Lane,
Leicester.**

Which Councillors were there:

Councillor Barbara Chambers

Councillor Nigel Porter

INFORMATION FAIR

The following information stands were sited in the room. Members of the public had an opportunity to visit the stands and talk to Councillors, Council staff and representatives from other services, and to ask questions and raise issues.

TABLE 1

Ward Councillors and General Information

Members of the public were able to talk to their Ward Councillors and Council Officers and raise general enquiries or issues.

TABLE 2

10,000 Trees

Local residents were given an opportunity to talk to Brian Stafford, Parks and Green Spaces to find out about the project and give suggestions of where in the Aylestone Ward they wanted to see new trees planted.

TABLE 3

Street Cleaning

Dawn Eagland, Area Service Manager, Cleansing Services was present to answer questions relating to Street Cleaning.

TABLE 4

Aylestone Meadows Project

Ellen Bianchini, Festival Director and Jasia McArdle, Project Manager from The Spark Children's Arts Festival were present to talk to residents about the Play Spaces project at Aylestone Meadows.

TABLE 5

Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre Proposals

Reverend Alistair Helm from The Church of the Nativity, Cavendish Road was available to answer any questions relating to the Church's proposals for the Centre.

TABLE 6

Leicestershire Constabulary

Members of the public were given an opportunity to talk to a representative from the Leicestershire Constabulary.

TABLE 7

Spirit of Aylestone

Members of the public were able to talk to representatives from the Spirit of Aylestone, a group which represents some of the churches in Aylestone.

TABLE 8

Aylestone Park Residents Group

Representatives from the Aylestone Park Residents Group were present to talk to members of the public about their community group.

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.

12. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Nigel Porter was elected as Chair for the meeting.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Sansome from the Special Olympics team.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they might have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Act applied to them.

No such declarations were made.

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Aylestone Community Meeting held on 21 May 2008 at Aylestone Baptist Church were circulated and Members were asked to approve them as a correct record.

Councillor Porter requested two amendments to the minutes as follows:

- Minute item 8 (Feedback): to note that the comment that the Council could not take action against Travellers on privately owned land, was made by Adrian Russell (Service Director, Environmental Services) and not Councillors.
- Minute item 10 (1) (Any Other Business – The Link Road): to note that the Aylestone Councillors had concerns about plans to reinstate the Link Road, and not that they opposed the plans.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the above meeting, subject to the above amendments, be approved as a correct record.

A member of the public commented that the draft ward action plan had been drawn up from a meeting, which had been attended by approximately 40 people, and therefore it should not be viewed as a fair representation of the people who lived in Aylestone. It was explained that views of residents had been sought in various

different ways, not solely at Community Meetings and Councillor Porter added that there was still time for people to give their comments.

16. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES / 10,000 TREES

Adrian Russell, gave a presentation on the work that Environmental Services had carried out in the Aylestone Ward between January and June 2008. A newsletter was also distributed to everyone present, which provided supporting information to the presentation.

Adrian explained that Environmental Services were responsible for a variety of different services, which included the following:

- **Refuse collection and waste**

The city achieved a waste composting and recycling rate of 33% in 2007/08, which was an improvement on 2006/07 (27%). The target was 40%, and help from City residents was needed to achieve this. If anyone wanted a replacement green box, or a copy of the Green Guide to Waste and Recycling they were asked to telephone 0116 252 7002. Adrian mentioned that the number of reported missed collections of bins, in Aylestone were less than the city-wide average, and added that where missed bins were reported, the aim was for them to be emptied the next working day.

Adrian reminded everyone that the Council offered a “Five for Free” collection of bulky waste and there were also two community recycling centres.

- **Cleansing Services**

This service dealt with various issues including fly tipping and graffiti removal. Adrian explained that the number of fly tipping incidents at 25, were less than the city-wide average of 73. However Adrian showed a picture of one incident in Disraeli Street, where approximately 80 tyres were dumped. It was explained that the Council did try to find and prosecute offenders of such enviro-crimes.

Adrian explained that a new service had been provided in removing graffiti from Cable Boxes. These were the responsibility of Virgin Media, but they had paid the Council a fee to paint over all the boxes located in the city. It was likely that this figure would be re-negotiated at a later date, when it was known exactly how many cable boxes there were. However, the meeting heard that a total of 1116 boxes were painted during the month of June and July alone.

- **Noise control**

A service was provided 7 days a week (including the evenings). Noise control was one of the busiest services, with domestic noise proving to be one of the most common problems. The Team had received over 1,000 complaints during the 6 months from January to June 2008 and each complaint could typically take 3 or 4 visits from Officers to resolve.

- **Food safety**

Adrian explained that 20 businesses in Aylestone were inspected and examples were given of premises with the best standards of food safety. Adrian explained that after an inspection, premises were given a smile safe certificate to display, and whereas all premises were welcome to display their award, it was usual that only the top rated premises actually did so. If members of the public could not see a smile safe certificate at their takeaway etc, they were invited to check out their rating by logging onto the Council's website as follows: www.leicester.gov.uk/smilesafe

- **Licensing**

Adrian also explained that there was a new street trading policy, which came into operation from 27 August 2008. From then, anyone who wanted to sell fast food from mobile vans would need a licence, and there was a presumption against granting licences for street trading, especially outside schools. Ice cream vans were an exception to this rule, but these were only permitted to trade outside schools at the end of the day.

- **Building Control**

Adrian explained that this section dealt with building safety and added that they had received just over 100 calls during the first 6 months of the year. An example was given of a dangerous wall in Leeson Street/Duncan Road and the meeting heard that in such cases, notice was given to the owner to make the structure safe, but if necessary the Council would undertake the necessary repairs and then re-charge the owner.

Building Control was especially busy after the earth tremor earlier this year, where there was damage to buildings that had been poorly maintained.

- **Parks**

The meeting heard that Aylestone Hall Gardens had retained its Green Flag Award for a further year.

Adrian reminded everyone of the 10,000 Trees Project. 1500 trees had already been planted and suggestions were invited for ideas for locations for the remaining 8500 trees. People were asked to talk to Brian Stafford in the information fair, at the end of the meeting.

Members of the public then raised the following questions with Adrian, or made the following points.

- **Does the Council take steps to check what happens to waste/refuse?
Copies of the Leicester Mercury were found dumped in India.**

Adrian explained that the Council were confident that the newspapers had not originated from the City Council, as the Council did not send any of its waste abroad. In addition, any paper that was put into wheely bins did not go into Landfill.

- **What happens to Food Waste? How is it dealt with?**

Adrian explained that any food waste and garden waste was extracted at the ball mill and then made into compost.

- **Can plastics be recycled?**

The meeting heard that only good quality plastics could be recycled; other plastics had to go into the wheely bins.

- **Can something be done about wheely bins that are left on the streets?**

It was explained that the Council had been piloting a scheme in Jarrom Street, where fines were issued to residents who left their bins out. The City-Wide Wardens would be commencing duties very soon and they would be dealing with matters such as this.

Adrian was thanked for his presentation.

17. LANSDOWNE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE PROPOSALS

Rev. Alistair Helm, Vicar of the Church of The Nativity, Cavendish Road, was introduced to the meeting.

Alistair thanked the Chair for the opportunity to come to the meeting and explained that the Church of The Nativity was a joint venture between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. Alistair then gave a presentation on the church's proposals for the Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre:

- The church was seeking council and community support for a partnership between Leicester City Council and the Church of The Nativity, to enable the Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre to become a focus for the community.
- The church hoped to invest in the fabric of the centre to enable the centre to become an improved facility for people in Aylestone.
- The present church building had no parking facilities and the building needed investment to make it suitable for users with disabilities.
- A survey carried out by church members showed that Aylestone residents wanted more facilities for young and older people. Alistair explained that the church already had a varied outreach, which included coffee mornings, jumble sales, a drama group, a supper club and a walking club, but the church wanted to do more.

- Age Concern had indicated that they would welcome facilities in Aylestone for older people, because presently they needed to travel into town.
- Why Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre? The Centre was at the heart of the community, and there was plenty of space, however it was a tired building. The feeling was that it was waiting to be transformed. Alistair added that the proposals for the extension had come from the Leicester City Council's property department.
- The Church of the Nativity hoped to sell their current building, invest some of the money and use the balance to improve the Centre. The Centre would require a lot of work and people from the church had been involved in helpful discussions with Steve Goddard, Head of Community Services, Adults and Housing Department.
- Steve explained that discussions about the proposal had been taking place for a considerable length of time. The Council had been very concerned as the Centre was tired and dilapidated, and as the Council managed about 40 buildings, it was difficult to resource them all. Steve added that this was a real opportunity to work with the Church and put the building at the heart of the community.

The following questions were asked:

- **Will people who currently use the building, still be able to use it?**
Yes, existing people will still be able to use the Centre, but it was anticipated that new groups will use it.
- **Is there an assurance that the Church on Cavendish Road will not be demolished?**

Alistair explained that it would not be possible to say what would happen to the building.

- **Who will own the building if the Church of the Nativity move into the Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre?**

Steve explained that there would be a lease agreement. The Council did not have money to invest and were therefore looking for a working partnership with the Church.

- **Will the building be a Church as well?**

Alistair said that there would be a worship area, and this was not uncommon now. An example was given of Hope Hamilton Church, which shared premises with a school.

Some residents expressed concerns that the extension might result in loss of garden space and parking and suggested that other avenues could be explored. Further

comments were also made though that the proposals were welcome and that they presented a good opportunity for improving facilities for the Aylestone community.

Alistair was thanked for his presentation.

18. CONSULTATION ON THE AYLESTONE MEADOWS PROJECT

Ellen Bianchini, Festival Director from the Spark Children's Art Festival was introduced to the meeting. Ellen explained that they were working with Leicester City Council and aimed to improve play facilities for children. One of their projects was currently being planned for Aylestone Meadows and an outline of the project was explained:

- The area would be landscaped, with interesting and natural features.
- The play space would be an alternative to a traditional play area; for example there would be no swings etc.
- The play area would be an unsupervised play space and it would be flagged up as such: it was intended that families would come with their children.
- Wildlife conservation would be very important.
- The play area needed to be durable; the issue of anti-social behaviour and vandalism would be looked at very closely.
- The project was an attempt to address previously expressed concerns that the meadows were under used.
- A brief would be sent to Landscape designers and it was hoped that they would provide 5 or 6 designs by Christmas, which would then be brought back to the Community Meeting. Suggestions of where else the designs could be displayed were welcome.

Concerns were expressed from residents that there was a considerable amount of anti-social behaviour on Aylestone Meadows and it was not safe for children to play in. It was also said that certain groups of people frequented the area, which might also put children in danger. Ellen explained that the play area would be designed for young children who, it was anticipated, would be accompanied by their parents or responsible adults. It was also an area that had been highlighted as needing more play facilities. Other residents commented that it would be better to mend broken play equipment on the park and to close the area around the lock in the evening. Other comments were received that supervision should be provided to ensure children's safety.

A Community Support Officer (CSO) informed the meeting that the Police had been aware of the problems around Aylestone Meadows. In the past the area had been one of the police priority areas but there had not been any recent issues. The CSO stated that she would pass these concerns on to her Sergeant.

Thanks were given to Ellen for her presentation.

Action	Officer/Councillor	Deadline
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	Identified	
To investigate complaints regarding anti-social behaviour on Aylestone Meadows.	Jerry Connolly, The Member Support Officer for Aylestone to liaise with Dave Budd, the Police Liaison Officer.	October 2008

19. WARD PRIORITIES

Anita Patel, Member Support Officer was introduced to the Community Meeting. Anita explained that following the priority card exercise at the first Aylestone meeting, the top priorities for the ward as identified by residents were as follows:

- **Traffic Improvements:**

The problems were with the volume of traffic, speeding vehicles and failures to comply with traffic lights and regulations. A particular hot spot was Aylestone Road/Lutterworth Road. There were also parking problems, especially on match days.

- **Street Scene Improvements.**

There were particular problems with litter outside takeaway restaurants and the area around the shops.

- **Better youth and play facilities.**

A lack of play space had been identified. Anita commented that the presentations from Alistair and Ellen would bring improvements to address this particular ward priority.

Anita added that anti-social behaviour and vandalism had also been raised as an issue within the ward.

A member of the public mentioned a planning application for a new Lidl store on Lutterworth Road that was due to come to the Planning and Development Control Committee in the near future. A resident stated that there were concerns about the impact of the store on the community and the effect the store would have on small shops in Aylestone. Councillors advised that any representations in respect of a planning application needed to be focussed on planning issues. Residents indicated by a show of hands, that the vast majority of people present at the meeting were against the Lidl store being built on Lutterworth Road.

20. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Anita explained that each Ward had a Community Meeting budget of £12,000. Within this total there were three different funds:

- Ward priority budget: A total of £6,700 was allocated within this fund for schemes that addressed the ward priorities.
- Ward Community budget: There was £3,300 in this budget for projects that would help the local community.
- Community Cohesion budget: £2,000 had been allocated to this fund, which was designed for projects that brought the local community together.

A question was asked as to whether it would be possible for funding to be given for “Aylestone in Bloom” and Anita explained that a budget application would need to be submitted and any applications received, would be assessed against the budget criteria.

A resident questioned whether it might be possible to have a 20mph speed limit around the schools and was asked to talk to Anita after the meeting.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Councillor Porter announced that the next meeting would be held in the Gilmorton Community Rooms in January 2009. The actual date of the meeting was still to be confirmed.

Residents were thanked for their attendance at the meeting and were asked to complete the yellow evaluation forms before they left.

22. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

