

Aylestone Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Thursday, 31 March 2011

**Held at: Aylestone Baptist Church, Lutterworth Road, Aylestone,
Leicester LE2 8PE**

Who was there:

Councillor Nigel Porter

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 Councillor Nigel Porter, Council staff and service representatives.

<p>Ward Councillors and General Information</p> <p>Members of the community could talk to the Councillor Porter or raise general queries</p>	<p>Police Issues</p> <p>PC Geraldine Beech and PCSO Steve Barnes were present to talk to members of the public about policing issues and queries.</p>
<p>Aylestone Local Action Group (ALAG)</p> <p>Lauren Hickling was present to talk to members of the community about the work of ALAG</p>	<p>City Wardens</p> <p>Members of the community could talk to Barbara Whitcombe (Team Manager, City Wardens) and Roy Smith (City Warden for Aylestone) and find out about the One Clean Leicester Campaign.</p>

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.

67. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Porter, as Chair welcomed everyone to the Aylestone Community Meeting.

Councillor Porter explained that the meeting was being held in the pre-election period. However, the intention of the meeting was discuss community issues and to hear the views of the community and not to discuss party politics. He added that if anyone had come to the meeting to discuss political issues, then they would need to leave the meeting.

Councillor Porter also stated that there was a strong local community who worked together to tackle local issues, such as the planning application on the local nature reserve. He thanked Anne Hayto and everyone who had worked together on that issue.

68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Chambers, Rev Dave Appleby and Nigel Sayer.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they had in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate whether Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Porter declared a personal interest in that he was a member of the Aylestone Local Action Group.

In respect of the funding applications from the Eyes Monsell Allotment and Gardens Society and the Friends of Aylestone Hall Gardens, he was in favour of both bids.

70. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Aylestone Community Meeting held on 18 November 2010 be approved as a correct record.

The Chair asked that members of the community talk to Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer if they were happy for community information to be circulated to them by the use of the email database which Jerry kept for the Aylestone Community Meeting.

71. ADDITIONAL ITEM OF BUSINESS: PLAY SPACE PROVISION IN AYLESTONE

The Chair agreed that an additional item of business could be considered to discuss play space provision in Aylestone, and Adrian Edge, the Play Development Officer in Leicester City Council was introduced to the meeting.

Adrian explained that he was responsible for the development of new play space and improvements to existing play spaces, and he made the following points:

- Aylestone did not fare particularly well for play space and there was a problem in trying to find appropriate areas. Health and safety considerations needed to be considered and the play area needed to be well overlooked to facilitate supervision.
- The City Council were currently working with Bloor Homes, on the detail of the play space that they would provide as part of their planning development. It was important that the play provision they provided catered for the wider community and not just for their residents. Options for the location of the play area were still being considered.
- In the short term, Bloor would be responsible for the maintenance of the play area. Details for the responsibility for long term maintenance were still to be finalised.
- The play provision on Aylestone Playing Fields was in need of a major refurbishment and it was also hoped to move the play area closer to the road if possible. Officers were seeking funding to make the improvements.

The following queries or comments were raised by members of the community:

- **What is happening regarding play space provision in Aylestone Hall Gardens?**

Adrian explained that a consultation had been carried out which showed mixed views as to whether there should be play space facilities in the gardens. A resident commented that at the time, there had been concerns that play facilities which had been designed for young children would be taken over by young adults. There was also concern that extra play space would result in the loss of the tennis courts, which were very well used. Comments were also made that Aylestone Hall Gardens had a particular character and were not suitable for a children's play area whilst other comments were received that the gardens should be enjoyed by adults and children and that there was plenty of room for a children's play area without any loss of tennis courts.

- **Montrose Park suffers from anti-social behaviour and play equipment is needed there.**

Adrian responded that Montrose Park had sustained issues with vandalism, but the location was not ideal because the park was not overlooked. He agreed that work needed doing on the park and PC Geraldine Beech suggested that it might be useful to carry out a site visit at the park.

- **There is a shelter on Dorothy Avenue which is popular with young people. It is well used and does not get vandalised. There is a large area of grass on Wigston Lane, which would make an ideal site for a shelter, which would give the young people somewhere to go.**

Possible sites for shelters might also be at the top of Canal Street, by the car park and also an area of grassland by the football club.

Adrian noted the comments and responded that consultation was important because the key for such shelters to work was for young people and residents to have their say as to where they should go.

Adrian finalised the discussion by saying that further discussions would take place with Bloor and the Environment Agency over the proposals for new play space and once an agreement had been reached, it was hoped that the plans would be brought to a future Aylestone Community Meeting. A resident suggested that if possible the plans should also be displayed in Aldi, for members of the public to view.

Adrian was thanked for coming to the meeting.

72. POLICE PRIORITIES AND CONSULTATIONS

PC Geraldine Beech gave an update of policing issues in the Aylestone Ward. She explained that the police priorities were anti-social behaviour on Wigston Lane and Belvoir Drive and in respect of the problems on Wigston Lane, a meeting had been arranged with the Head Teacher of Montrose Primary School.

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer, stated that in respect of the anti-social behaviour on Wigston Lane, some houses there had suffered from arson and criminal damage. A consultation had been carried out with residents and work had been carried out with the Parks Department to cut back the hedges to combat the anti-social behaviour. PC Beech added that the children's home staff were also keen to meet residents to try to resolve any problems.

A resident expressed concern that the warmer weather inevitably resulted in problems with people congregating on Aylestone Meadows and drinking alcohol. PC Beech responded that the Police were aware that there were problems every summer on Aylestone Meadows as it was an open space where children and youth congregated. The Police had already been out there and were aware of potential problems during the summer months.

Members of the public queried the current situation with the Lounge Café Bar on Aylestone Road. A representative from the Police stated that a hearing had taken place earlier in the day and it had been agreed that the Bar could re-open but with stricter conditions which would be tightly monitored.

PC Beech announced that the next Police consultation would be on Monday 4 April 2011 at Aldi and residents were also asked to keep the Police informed of any problems or issues that they were aware of.

73. AYLESTONE LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Lauren Hickling, secretary of Aylestone Local Action Group (ALAG) gave a presentation to the community meeting and talked about the work that the Group had been doing. The presentation included photographs of their achievements, including some of the planters and displays of flowers that ALAG had been responsible for. Lauren made the following points:

- ALAG had carried out a consultation with residents in respect of some planters to be displayed in Aylestone. The construction of the planters had been carried out by a local business and the Restorative Justice Team had helped with the installation of the planters.
- To date there had been no damage or graffiti to the planters.
- The Group had worked with children to plant sunflowers, to encourage birds and insects.
- Hanging baskets had been displayed in Aylestone and local shopkeepers had kept them watered.
- Summer flowers had been planted in troughs in Middleton Street and some troughs had been attached to railings on Wigston lane.
- Winter troughs had also been planted, with pansys etc.
- Bloor Homes had contributed £1,000 towards a new planter.
- The Group had carried out a litter pick.
- Looking to the future, ALAG hoped to have a notice board, although there were problems in trying to find a suitable site. They also hoped to install more planters and involve schools in their work. In addition they aimed to develop a more eco friendly method of watering the plants and hoped to recruit some volunteers who would be willing to water the hanging baskets.

The Chair gave a vote of thanks to Lauren and the Aylestone Local Action Group, commenting that there had been an excellent team effort. A resident stated that the planters had looked very attractive and members of the community gave Lauren and the team a round of applause.

74. ONE CLEAN LEICESTER

Barbara Whitcombe, Team Manager, City Wardens gave an update on the work of the City Wardens. She explained that a campaign had been held during the month of March to clean up 'grot spots' in Leicester. Many of these 'grot spots' were on private land and some belonged to Network Rail.

Barbara explained that members of the public were offered an additional method of reporting problems such as litter, graffiti etc by using Text or MMS technology (such as with a Blackberry or iPhone). People were asked to report issues by sending in details of the problem, the location and if possible, a picture as well. The query would be placed onto the Leicester City Website and progress in dealing with the query could be tracked. The member of the public who had reported the problem would also be informed when the problem had been resolved. Members of the public were still welcome to use the telephone to report problems on either 07725 20 20 20, or 252 7001.

A member of the public reported that he had encountered problems in the past when using the computer at numerous city libraries as access to the Leicester City Council website had been blocked by the firewall. A resident at the meeting stated that she worked at Aylestone Library and expressed concern stating that access to the council website should not be blocked and this was a fault that needed reporting. She asked that if this problem occurred again, the user should alert members of staff, in order that the problem could be rectified.

The Chair reported problems with litter on Lutterworth Road, stating that there was a large private house with a considerable amount of mess in their garden, which was very unpleasant. Barbara took details of the problem and responded that Environmental Health had new powers to address such problems on privately owned land.

A member of the Aylestone Meadows Appreciation Society announced that a litter pick had been organised for Saturday 3 April at 10.30am.

75. BUDGET

Jerry Connolly, the Member Support Officer to the Aylestone Community Meeting explained that funding applications for the Eyres Monsell Allotment and Gardens Society, new meeting room (£3658) and the Friends of Aylestone Hall Gardens Summer Concert (£12,466.75) had been submitted, and he recommended that they be deferred to the new financial year. He stated that there was a dispute with the finance section regarding the balance remaining in the community meeting budget, as they believed that there was £3900 left in the budget and Jerry believed that there was £6000 remaining. This was still being investigated.

Jerry explained that the finance section had also advised that any funding applications that were supported at the meeting could not be met out of the 2010/11

budget because it was the end of the financial year. There could also be no presumption that any outstanding balance that remained in the community meeting budget would be carried forward to 2011/12. It was therefore advisable to assume that there would be no carried forward.

However, in view of the forthcoming elections in May 2011, Jerry advised that it would not be appropriate to support funding applications in advance of the new financial year.

Jerry added that funding applications for the following projects had been agreed by Ward Councillors between meetings as they were under the threshold for fast-tacked applications:

- Police and Community Support Group – 100% best attendance project: £500
- Friends of Aylestone Hall Gardens Children’s Gala Day: £500 plus £200
- Aylestone Local Action Group – improvements to shopping area: £500
- Aylestone Local Action Group – planter: £500
- Leicester City Council Sports Regeneration on behalf of Leicester City Tennis Development Group – Beacon Site for Tennis: £500
- Gilmorton Development Group – post mounted litter bins: £400 x 2

Members of the community then discussed the budget and the following comments were made:

- If there was money remaining in the community meeting budget, this should be spent, rather than face the risk that any outstanding balance could not be carried forward.
- There was a belief that the financial year ended on 5 April and not 31 March.
- Better planning was needed in future to avoid a similar situation. It appeared that funding applications had been submitted at the last minute to avoid losing out on funding.

The Chair responded that he was aware that both of the bids had been planned for some time and had not been rushed through at the last minute.

- There was a need for more transparency in the budget system with a clearer system. Decisions had been made outside meetings.
- It would be better to defer the bids to the new financial year, when they could be considered properly and in line with the Terms of Reference.
- It appeared that there was sufficient money remaining to pay for the Eyres Monsell Allotment and Gardens Society funding application for a new meeting room, and there was a suggestion that this should be supported.

The Chair asked for members of the community to indicate whether or not they wished to support the Eyres Monsell Allotment and Gardens Society funding application. A show of hands indicated that 12 were in favour of the application and 5 against.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application from the Eyres Monsell Allotments and Gardens Society, to the value of £3658 be supported.

Action Taken	Officer identified	Deadline
That the funding application for the Eyres Monsell Allotment and Gardens' Society that had been supported at the meeting, be submitted to the Cabinet Lead for approval.	Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer	As soon as possible

76. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.58 pm.