

Thurncourt Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 15 July 2013

**Held at: Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre, Thurncourt
Road, LE5 2NG**

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Luis Fonseca

INFORMATION SHARING – ‘INFORMATION FAIR’ SESSION

Information on the following topics was available in the room:-

- City Warden Service
- Police Issues
- Ward Councillors and general enquiries

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 Fonseca was elected as Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Pears, Team Leader (Highway Asset Management), and Chrissie Field, Area Manager with the Housing Service.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

5. SAFETY IN THE HOME

Unfortunately, officers from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service were unable to be at the meeting, due to their shift patterns. This item would therefore be deferred until the next meeting.

6. HOUSING ISSUES

Tracy McAllistair, Team Leader with the Housing service, advised the meeting that there had been a change in how fire inspections were held for flats. These

previously had been done by the Fire and Rescue Service, but at the end of 2012 responsibility for doing them had passed to the Council's Housing service.

Flats would be monitored either weekly, monthly or three-monthly. The actual frequency depended on the nature of the flats, (for example, warden-controlled flats were inspected weekly). The first inspections would be held over the next few months, with the first one being at the St Austell Road flats.

Some problems had arisen with things being left in communal areas. Over the years, some people had used the communal areas for decorative items and had put down door mats. In addition, some drying and cupboard areas had been taken over for the storage of personal items. Residents had been asked to clear these areas, but on some occasions there had been reluctance to do so.

In the future, if people did not comply with requests to clear the areas, a warning letter would be sent. If the area still was not cleared, the terms of the person's tenancy would be enforced.

Tenants were invited to suggest ways in which the outside of Council flats could be improved. These suggestions would then be considered for funding from the Environmental Improvement budget.

Residents raised concerns that the communal areas outside the Tarbat Road flats were not being maintained properly. For example, the grass had not been cut for some time, even though the Council had promised to clear it on more than one occasion, and when it was cut, the grass was left in clumps, which looked very untidy. Residents had tried to keep the area in order, but were not able to do so.

Tracy McAllistair confirmed that the grass should be cut about three times per year, although this year the programme had slipped due to very wet weather in the spring, and that she would speak to the estate manager about this.

7. HIGHWAYS ISSUES

As no Highways officers were able to attend the meeting, the Chair presented an update on highways issues in the Ward on their behalf:-

- The Community Meeting had funded the installation of bollards outside the entrance to Willowbrook Primary School on Roborough Green, to stop cars parking on the footway. These had now been installed;
- The sunken concrete bay on Gervas Road had been replaced with bitmac;
- Colchester Road near to 114/116: two bollards had been installed to stop vehicles taking a shortcut along the footway;
- Slurry sealing pre-patching on Havencrest Drive, Barbara Avenue, Peters Drive and Bryngarth Crescent was not part of the 2013/14 maintenance programme, but would be considered for inclusion in next year's programme;

- Public Lighting were progressing the installation of an additional lamp column on the footpath in Colthurst Way. This had been funded by the Community Meeting; and
- Between 1 April 2012 and 12 July 2013, urgent safety repairs had been carried out at 229 locations on the carriageway and 371 locations on footways.

Councillor Fonseca advised the meeting that the Ward Councillors were due to meet the City Mayor and Highway officers on 29 July 2013 to discuss future highway maintenance schemes. Residents were invited to suggest items for discussion at this meeting.

The meeting further noted that a series of Patch Walks was being planned, to identify issues within the Ward and consider how they could be resolved. Residents were welcome to join these Walks, which would be arranged to suit the majority of any residents attending.

8. PRESENTATION ON THE THURNBY LODGE COMMUNITY FUN DAY

Allan Gratrix thanked everyone who had taken part in the Thurnby Lodge Community Fun Day, which had been very successful. He reminded the meeting that this was an annual event, usually held in either June or July. The weather this year had been very good, in contrast to the previous year, which had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

On the day, £707 had been raised for the Computer Club and further donations were still being received.

Particular thanks were given to Steve Polle, who used to work as the premises manager at Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre, for all his help and to the City Wardens and Parks officers for their help during the day and in clearing up afterwards. The Police also were thanked for their work on the day.

In reply to a resident who had been unaware of the event, it was noted that the Fun Day was widely advertised throughout the ward, including at the Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre. Some photographs of this year's events could be seen on the 55th community website and on Facebook.

The Chair advised that he had attended the Fun Day, which had been well organised and very enjoyable. Congratulations on the success of the event were passed to the organisers.

9. CITY WARDEN SERVICE

Nicole Powell, City Warden, advised the meeting that:-

- The City Wardens had new powers to ensure that the correct licenses for skips, scaffolding and building materials on the highway were obtained and implemented. These licenses took about three days to be supplied and cost £30;
- Requests had been received from residents for dog fouling issues to be resolved. Work was on-going on this, for example warnings had been stencilled on the ground around the Stornaway Road area.

A lot of dog fouling was occurring in the Willowbrook area.

It would be helpful if photographs of dog fouling incidents could be sent to the City Wardens.

The City Wardens had been spraying dog mess with coloured biodegradable paint, but had had to stop, as this was classified as graffiti.

City Wardens could only fine dog owners when they saw dog fouling occurring;

- Fly tipping was decreasing, but an increasing amount of grass cuttings were being fly tipped. Residents therefore were reminded that the Council would collect 15 bags of garden waste free of charge every 2 months.

A successful prosecution had been obtained for fly tipping.

Residents reported that, although previously reported, a Council van was still being parked on the corner of Ocean Road. Nicole Powell advised that it had been established that two vans were parking there at different times. This was being monitored.

In response to questions, it was noted that all Council employees who had use of vans could take them home and the Police confirmed that the way the vans were being parked meant that they were not classed as an obstruction.

10. POLICE ISSUES UPDATE

Sergeant Stuart Wood, of Leicestershire Police, updated the meeting on Police issues in the ward:-

- The new computer system being used by the Police did not enable crime statistics to be identified at ward level. Work was ongoing to enable these statistics to be accessed, so it was hoped that they could be reported to the next meeting;
- A police priority for the ward was anti-social behaviour. Previous work had successfully reduced the number of incidents, but too much was still unreported. Residents therefore were encouraged to report incidents and were reminded that if they telephoned Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 they could report them anonymously; and

- During the winter there had been a lot of young people playing football in the street, but there had been nowhere to move them on to, as there was no lighting on the Willowbrook Park Ball Park. An application therefore had been made to this meeting for a grant towards repairing it, (see minute 11(m) below).

In view of concerns previously raised about vehicles parking on the footway, residents asked for clarification on what constituted an obstruction, (see minute 9 above). Sergeant Wood advised that, in general, it was not an obstruction if a child's buggy or a mobility scooter could still pass by on the pavement. In this case, it was still possible to see right down the road when you pulled up to the junction. The Highway Code said that drivers should edge out from a junction and if this was done here it should be safe.

Some residents suggested that double yellow lines could be installed at the junction, but it was noted that this was an expensive and slow process. One option could be to consider whether yellow lines could be funded from the Ward Community Budget.

11. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET

It was noted that £95 had been carried forward from the 2012/13 Ward Community Budget, so the total amount available for 2013/14 was £18,095.

In response to concerns from residents at the meeting, it was noted that both Ward Members were consulted on grant applications and given time to make comments.

Consideration was then given to the following applications:-

a) 3174 – Taxi Scheme

Allan Gratrix, on behalf of Thurnby Lodge Community Association, reminded the meeting that funding had been approved for this scheme for the last few years. Under the scheme, elderly people, (ie, those of state pensionable age), and disabled people received a one-way taxi journey within the ward boundaries.

Funding for the scheme was held and administered by the Community Association and released to the scheme in £500 tranches.

The taxi company used was Quick Cabs. Users were charged £3.50 one-way and Quick Cabs charged the Community Association £2 for the other leg of the journey. This discount had been agreed, to enable the scheme to fund more journeys.

The service was well used and Quick Cabs had suggested that it be expanded to include journeys to Tesco store at Hamilton, as the local supermarket was quite expensive, but this had not been considered yet.

The service cost just under £1,500 per year to provide.

AGREED:

- 1) That a grant of £1,500 to Thurnby Lodge Community Association for the provision of a taxi scheme be supported; and
- 2) That the Thurnby Lodge Community Association be asked to consider extending the scheme to include journeys to the Tesco store at Hamilton and Hilltop Surgery.

b) 3175 – Wednesday Club Outing and Meal

AGREED:

That a grant of £440 to Mrs June Dyson for the Wednesday Club Outing and Meal be supported.

c) 3176 – Friday Bingo Club

June Worley, of the Friday Club, advised the meeting that the Club currently had between 20 and 30 members, who each paid a 25p entry charge to each session. The Club also was holding a monthly draw, with prizes of £15, £10 and £5, and a prize draw based on membership numbers, to encourage people to attend.

AGREED:

That a grant of £200 to Mrs June Worley for the Friday Bingo Club be supported.

d) 3177 – Tuesday Bingo Club

Brenda Ayres, of the Tuesday Bingo Club, advised the meeting that, although the Club tried to raise funds, (for example, through a raffle and a door charge), it was not able to cover its rent.

AGREED:

That a grant of £200 to Brenda Ayres for the Tuesday Bingo Club be supported.

e) 3178 – Thurnby Lodge & Willowbrook Summer Playscheme

Shirley Rawson, Assistant Head of Thurnby Lodge Primary School, explained that the playscheme would run from 29 July for two weeks. Various activities were provided and the City Wardens organised a litter pick for the children. This scheme was very popular, being oversubscribed each year.

AGREED:

That a grant of £1,500 to Thurnby Lodge Primary School for the Thurnby Lodge and Willowbrook Summer Playscheme be supported.

f) 3179 – Purchase Garden Equipment: Shed & Lawn Mower

The meeting noted that a grant of £500 had been approved under the Council's fast-track procedure to the 55th Gardens and Allotments for the purchase of a shed and lawn mower.

g) 3180 – Assistance with Running Costs

Pat Darby, Chairman of Thurnby Rangers Football Club, explained that he had run the football club for 38 years and had financed it himself, but no longer had the resources to do so. However, without support the Club could not continue, which would affect a lot of people.

An additional problem for the Club was the amount of vandalism being experienced at the ground. The Police had suggested that shutters be installed, but there was concern that these would be vandalised.

AGREED:

That a grant of £1,500 to Thurnby Rangers Football Club for assistance with running costs be supported.

h) 3182 – Football Coming Home

The meeting noted that a grant of £500 had been approved under the Council's fast-track procedure to Jumpin Jacqs Children and Youth Venture (Mrs Jacqueline Clayton-Naute) towards the Football Coming Home project.

i) 3183 – The Generation Games

AGREED:

That this application be deferred, to enable more information on the project to be obtained.

j) 3184 – The Chit Chat Club Day Outing

AGREED:

That a grant of £500 to Mrs Wendy Biddles for the Chit Chat Club Day Outing be supported.

k) 3185 – Football Equipment

Mr Merrington, Organiser of Thurnby Lodge CC Football, explained that boys and girls aged 10 – 19 played through the club, with training taking place every Sunday morning at Willowbrook Park.

AGREED:

1) That a grant of £100 to Thurnby Lodge CC Football for football equipment be supported; and

2) That the Parks service be asked to mark out the football pitch on Willowbrook Park after the grass has been mown.

l) 3186 – Run a Local Football Team in the Thurnby Lodge Area

AGREED:

That a grant of £478 to Creation Builders for the running of a local football team in the Thurnby Lodge area be supported.

m) 3187 – Willowbrook Park Ball Court Lighting

AGREED:

That a grant of £1,500 to Nazira Vania, (Development Officer with Leicester City Council's Community Safety Team), towards the purchase of Willowbrook Park Ball Court Lighting be supported.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Attendance of Ward Councillors at Community Meetings

Residents expressed concern about Councillor Wann not attending Thurncourt Community Meetings.

It was requested that a report be made to the next Thurncourt Community Meeting on what the rules on attendance were for Councillors and what happened if they did not attend meetings.

Councillor Fonseca confirmed that Councillor Wann was consulted on all applications for grants from the Meeting's Community Budget as required. He further advised that he would raise residents' concerns with the City Mayor and report back to the next Thurncourt Community Meeting.

There was some discussion on how this could be addressed, for example whether it should be raised through his political party, or whether, as a serving Councillor, this was an issue about the role of a Councillor under the Council's constitution. It was noted that, as Councillor Wann attended meetings of the Council, he fulfilled his legal duty on attendance.

b) Thanks to Chair

Further to the discussion on the non-attendance of Councillor Wann at Thurncourt Community Meetings, (see above), Councillor Fonseca was thanked for attending all Thurncourt Community Meetings.

c) Willowbrook Primary School

The Chair advised that Willowbrook Primary School recently had been selected as the Pupil Premium Awards Primary School of the Year.

The Meeting's congratulations were passed to all concerned.

d) Nazira Vania, Development Officer (Community Safety)

It was noted that Nazira Vania, Development Officer (Community Safety), would be leaving the Council in a few weeks to undertake further study. Shobhna Patel would

be taking over the Community Safety work for Thurncourt Ward and could be contacted either via the Council's main switchboard, or on her direct line: 0116 229 3630.

On behalf of the Community Meeting, the Chair thanked Nazira for the work that she had done to support the ward and wished her well for the future.

13. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.26 pm