

# Castle Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Tuesday, 5 November 2013**

**Held at: Friends Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Leicester LE2  
1WP**

Who was there:

Councillor Neil Clayton
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Councillor Patrick Kitterick
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Councillor Lynn Senior
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## **FORMAL SESSION**

### **26. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Patrick Kitterick was elected as Chair and welcomed everyone to the Castle Community Meeting.

### **27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Inspector C. Cockerill (Leicestershire Police) and Mrs R. Dickinson.

### **28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Senior declared 'An Other Disclosable' interest in that her partner was a Team Leader, Travel Planning & Development Co-ordination at the City Council, and for the avoidance of doubt / should the Team become involved in this issue, would leave the room when Agenda Item 12. 'Former Barclays Bank Building' was discussed. She left the meeting when this item was discussed.

Councillor Senior also declared 'An Other Disclosable' in the budget application item v) 'Cultural Quarter Business Association - Christmas Decorations' in that she owned a property near the Cultural Quarter on Charles Street, and would not take part in the decision making process for the funding application, should this building be included. She left the room when this item was discussed.

### **29. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Castle Community Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

### **30. HEALTHWATCH LEICESTER**

Mr Phillip Parkison, Interim Chair of Healthwatch Leicester, was present at the meeting to answer questions from residents, and to inform of how people could get involved to improve local health and social care services. It was agreed that Mr Parkinson be invited back to next Castle Community Meeting to deliver an update.

AGREED:

that Mr Parkinson, Healthwatch, be invited to the Castle Community Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014, to provide an update to the meeting.

### **31. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY UPDATE**

The Chair provided an update on the previously reported consultation on Homes in Multiple Occupancy, and letting boards in the area.

The Chair said following a period of statutory consultation, it was recommended that the Article 4 Direction be confirmed. The Council had made a non-immediate

direction, whereby the permitted development rights would be withdrawn at least 12 months after the direction was originally made to protect the Council from compensation claims, and the order would come into effect on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The Chair added that the Council's Supplementary Planning Document also assisted when looking at planning applications, and applications for student accommodation could be refused if it was considered there was already a high level of students in an area.

Residents expressed their thanks to the Council for introducing the Article 4 Direction, as they claimed they had reached a tipping point with regards to shared accommodation the Clarendon Park area. The Chair added a tipping point had also been reached in the Jarrom Street area.

A resident asked if there had been a planning application submitted for a plot of land at the end of Jarrom Street. The Chair said he was not aware of an application but he would check and provide an update at the next meeting.

The Chair informed the meeting of the voluntary code of practice for estate agents in the city for the display of To Let Boards, mainly in respect of the size of the signs that would be permitted. It was also requested that signs would be flush to a house and not on a post. The Chair added the effectiveness of the code of practice would be monitored over the next 12 months. If the voluntary code was found not to be effective, the Council may consider an option to apply for a Regulation 7 Direction under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertising) (England) Regulations 2007.

## **32. LEICESTER UNIVERSITY - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Shani Storrie, Interim Head of Student Welfare Service, was present at the meeting to provide an update on the liaison work at the University of Leicester, and feedback after Freshers Week.

Shani informed the meeting that the University took a keen interest in the community, and had twice-yearly meetings with key representatives of Leicester City Council and the community. A meeting was scheduled to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014, and Shani asked those present at the meeting to forward to her information on issues that could be taken to the meeting. She added that leaflets had been sent to houses in the community with contact details on how to report issues such as noise and anti-social behaviour, and an email had been sent to University of Leicester students on their responsibilities and how to conduct themselves in the community.

Shani informed the meeting that students had been informed of bulk collections from student accommodation, and the University had previously worked with City Wardens to arrange two dates for bulk collections. She asked that residents feedback to the University of 'hotspots' which required clearing.

The meeting was informed the University had worked with the Student Union and Rock Star organisers regarding Freshers Week events. Shani said there were measures in place, with police and doormen informed. The organised pub crawls had a 50/1 ratio of students and organisers, and there were no minimum pricing

promotions or free drinks and shots at the venues. She added that coaches were used to bring students in. Shani said there was an agreement that the Police and Leicester City Council would be informed and permission obtained for future organised events.

Residents complained that the recent Freshers Week had been the worst ever. They said student groups had arranged their own events alongside the University and Rockstar events, and that students were not aware that people lived on and around New Walk and should be better informed of the fact. They added residents on New Walk had made arrangements to meet with Sir Clive Loader to deal with anti-social behaviour in the area. Residents said the arranged Rockstar events did have a positive impact and all student groups should use the promoter.

Residents said they had not received one of the leaflets, and would welcome information on contact details to report noise and anti-social behaviour issues. They asked that the leaflets be distributed along Victoria Park Road. They also suggested students should patrol the area and become 'Champions' for the area. Shani said the University worked in partnership with the Police. She said that initial complaints should be made to the Police (who had powers of arrest) and the Noise Team at Leicester City Council. She said it was difficult to identify if it was students who had caused issues, and it was important that residents provided as much information as possible when making a complaint to help identify the student(s) involved. She said if the student and/or accommodation could be identified, a mediation meeting would be arranged. She said mediation was voluntary, and if the student did not attend the first meeting, their department would be contacted and a home visit would be made. She said that sometimes the issue was not so serious that it would warrant a student being excluded from the University and some issues could be resolved through the mediation. A resident said that complaints made to the Beat Team would be passed on to the liaison officer at the University also, and was effective in dealing with issues.

The meeting was informed that the city wardens, officers from the Fire and Rescue Service and police officers in Clarendon Park, supported by the Universities had visited homes and undertaken house safety checks in 2012, during October, November and December. Information had been passed on to students in each household regarding smoke alarms, anti-social behaviour, noise, crime/fire safety and bins, and the same would occur during the final months of 2013. It was reported that 90% of students had been spoke to.

Shani said that issues raised at the meeting would be taken back to the Student Union for discussion.

The Chair thanked the University of Leicester for their attendance.

### **33. COMMUNITY SAFETY IN CLARENDON PARK**

This agenda item was included in updates from the Police and City Wardens.

### **34. POLICING UPDATE**

Police Sergeant Andy Cox and Police and Community Support Rachel Smith were present at the meeting to provide an update on policing issues in the Castle Ward.

Sgt. Cox said there had been an increase in burglaries in the area, particularly amongst amongst new students who were seen to be an easy target. Sgt. Cox said it was likely the thieves knew the houses were HMOs. The police, with local community officers and the fire services, were visiting premises where security issues were visible, to offer advice to the residents. Sgt. Cox said that despite intensive efforts to inform people, crime was still on the increase, though there had been some uptake on additional security schemes. The Police also had patrol plans for the area, which would be targeted at different times of the week to assist in identifying criminals and make it difficult for criminals to move around the area.

Sgt. Cox said there had been preventative work on theft from motor vehicles, particularly in car parks, and information packs had been produced by the Council's Community Safety Team. Sgt. Cox said there had been a spike in criminal activity in August 2013, when a known individual was released from prison, and a fall in incident numbers since the return of the individual to prison.

A resident said there was an increase in burglary on the same street during the summer and residents were fearful for their own safety and properties. Sgt. Cox said that fear of crime could be worse than the crime. He said there had been a team of police officers on patrol strategy in the area during the summer, some plain clothes, some on bikes, in a plain car, and marked car to deter burglars. He added the police sometimes had lucky breaks from forensics gathered at burglary sites, but said people needed to report suspicious activity at the time, and not later. He offered to take the names and addresses of residents concerned following the meeting.

A resident said there had been a lot of bike thefts in the city centre. Sgt. Cox said there was a strategy planned to tackle bike thefts using technology. He added people needed to be educated and told to obtain better locks, such as the 'D' locks which could not be cut with bolt croppers.

The Police were thanked for their update.

### **35. CITY WARDEN'S UPDATE**

Chris Bramley-Brown, the City Warden for Castle Ward informed the meeting he had attended the Fresher events at both universities. Issues discussed with students had included waste disposal from student accommodation. Chris was also working with students to reduce fly-tipping around Newarke Street.

Chris reported that patrols in the area had resulted in Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) being given to people distributing free printed matter with no licence, and further action was being taken against one company. There had also been five incidents of flyposting which had all been dealt with, and warning letter were sent to first time offenders.

Chris said City Wardens now had powers to report the state of unkempt private gardens and premises to the Environmental Health Team, in addition to the monitoring of the appropriate permissions for skips and scaffolding in the city.

Barbara Whitcombe, Team Manager (City Wardens), was present at the meeting to discuss the Council's current consultation on providing city wardens with powers to distribute FPNs to people spitting, which would be treated as a litter offence. She informed the meeting there were byelaws that could be used to prosecute people caught spitting, but these went against the Council's enforcement policy and people would have gained a criminal record.

Barbara said the Council had worked with Waltham Forest Council who were successful at a Magistrates Court when defending a decision to distribute FPNs to people spitting, as they had used evidence from a public consultation in their defence. Barbara said thousands of responses for the consultation were needed as evidence, and consultation would end on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

Barbara informed the meeting of a community litter-pick by residents, tenant's association volunteers and council workers on St Andrews estate as part of Make a Difference Day. It was reported they collected 15 large bin liners of rubbish bags of litter.

The City Warden and Barbara Whitcombe were thanked for their updates.

### **36. BULWER ROAD COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE**

The meeting was informed of a small garden area on Bulwer Road, near Queens Road, which had been cleared for the summer. A fence had been erected and kept locked for liability reasons.

Councillor Kitterick thanked local people for taking the space on and for a small deposit residents could obtain a key and use the space.

### **37. FORMER BARCLAYS BANK BUILDING**

Over 150 residents attended the meeting to discuss interest by the company Tesco in the recently closed Barclay Bank building.

The Chair gave a brief update on the current position. Earlier in the year Tesco had denied any interest in the property which was seen by residents to be an attempt to stop residents from starting a campaign. A weeks prior to the Community Meeting, residents had received a letter from the organisation stating their intent to open a store in the building.

Residents were present at the meeting to discuss ways in which the planned development could be stopped and the following points were raised:

- The change of use from a bank to a shop did not require planning permission, but the installation of signage, a cash machine and refrigeration unit would.

- Tesco at this point were not planning to expand the store. If Tesco wished to expand into the garage area adjacent to the building, a planning application would need to be submitted. Simon Petar (Tesco) had stated he was happy to arrange a meeting with the community.
- The store would have to apply for a licence to sell alcohol.
- There were four licensing objectives to which residents could object against, one of which was 'the prevention of public nuisance'. The store was planning to close at 11.00pm, and any later than this time, then the residents would have a case.
- There was a Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) on London Road and Granby Street which had been implemented due to the problem with street drinkers. There was not the same problem with street drinkers in Clarendon Park, and it took approximately a year to implement a CIZ.
- Residents would need to start a grass roots campaign with all the people in Clarendon Park to say they did not want a Tesco, and object at every stage of the development to show strength of the objection.
- The building would be unable to take deliveries from large lorries to the back. Communication from the organisation stated that smaller lorries would be used 2-3 times a day out of hours.
- The organisation would undercut local businesses.
- There would be issues with traffic at the junction, particularly if a cash machine was installed, but this was not a strong planning case for rejection.
- Barclays Bank should be contacted to see if the contracts had already been exchanged, and the Bank should be petitioned.
- A petition should be gathered to show the strength of feeling of the residents in Clarendon Park against the development.
- The Co-Op and smaller businesses in the area would be lost. Was the diversity and small trader aspect not relevant to planning.
- Sainsbury's should be boycotted to show Tesco that they too would be boycotted, and raise publicity of the campaign.
- Tesco was such a large organisation that Leicester City Council could not afford to take the company on in an appeal.
- Good news stories where Tesco and other organisations should be passed to the campaign organisers.
- Clarendon Park could not be changed to a Conservation Area, which was more about the appearance of an area, rather than the businesses contained within it.
- Students should also be involved in the campaign as a way of integrating students into the community.
- Land Registry documents held by a resident showed the forecourt of the building belonged to Leicester City Council.
- The company had offered incentives to communities when involved in previous disputes, and Tesco should be asked what they could contribute to the Clarendon Park area.

The Chair concluded after a show of hands that 99% of the meeting attendees wanted to become involved in the campaign. He summarised by saying a smaller core group would be set up to organise the campaign, involve the media and set up social media for the campaign. A sheet was circulated at the meeting for details of those people present who wished to become involved in the core group and/or wider

campaign. A resident suggested a logo be created to help in the identity of the campaign group.

Further information and progress would be brought to the next Castle Community Meeting.

### **38. CASTLE WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET**

The Chair presented the community meeting budget and explained that the following funding applications had been received:

**i) Leicester Basketball Developments CIC – Shoot to the Future**

**Amount Requested:       £1,000.00**

Funding was requested to support the project of youth development in the community by means of basketball. Ward Councillors asked for further clarity on numbers of castle residents it would involve.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be deferred pending further information requested by Ward Councillors.

**ii) Hamish Whiteley, Leicester Secular Society – Purchase and installation of a defibrillator in Secular Hall**

**Amount Requested:       £800.00**

Funding was requested for the purchase and installation of a defibrillator, to be available for users of the building and pedestrians in the Humberstone Gate Area. Ward Councillors requested further information, and said they would be happy to work with the applicant if it could be shown the funding would benefit city residents.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be deferred pending further information requested by Ward Councillors.

**iii) Clarendon Park Traders Association – Clarendon Park Christmas Arts and Crafts Fair**

**Amount Requested:       £3,250.00**

Funding was requested for support toward the event and the closure of the road.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £2,750.00

**iv) After18 – Christmas Event**

**Amount Requested:       £300.00**



Funding was requested to organise a Christmas event for 25 young people in transition between children to adult service, and for young asylum seekers.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £300.00

v) **Cultural Quarter Business Association – Christmas Decorations**

**Amount Requested:       £500.00**

Funding was requested for Christmas decorations for the cultural quarter for roads leading into and around Orton Square, for local residents and businesses.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £300.00

The following funding application was received after the agenda had been finalised.

vi) **Leicestershire Police – Target Hardening for Domestic Dwellings on Clarendon Park**

**Amount Requested:       £1,500.00**

Funding was requested for match funding for the Police to purchase door locks, window locks and other security kit in a Target Hardening Initiative in the area. The Ward Councillors approved the application with the proviso the residents requested assistance with additional security at their homes.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £1,500.00

**Applications fast-tracked**

Sue Ryan – Art House – hopper busses and publicity for events showcasing artwork (joint application with Stoneygate and Knighton, £250 from each ward)  
£250.00

**Applications not supported**

Stigmaart, Raisa Turner – From “Suffrage to Parliament” a UK Parliament week event  
£500.00

**39. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.