

Knighton Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 7 January 2014

Held at: Knighton Parish Centre, Church Lane, Leicester.

Who was there:

Councillor Ross Grant

Councillor Dr Lynn Moore

46. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Lynn Moore was Chair for the meeting.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gugnani.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

49. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2013 were approved as a correct record.

50. CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU

Helen Child, Operations Director for Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), Leicester gave a brief presentation on the services they provided in the city, it included the following points:-

- CAB had been awarded the City Council's advice services contract.
- They were soon moving to 60 Charles Street, in the City Centre.
- There was a contact centre, but people could also phone, email, there were some home visit and 10 outreach sessions across the city.
- Specialist advice was provided on debt, housing, employment and benefits.
- Volunteers provided many of the services, more volunteers were always welcomed and full training was provided.
- 6000 people were provided with advice in the first 6 months and 195 people from Knighton were advised in the first quarter of the year.
- Support provided could range from minor advice to casework relating to bankruptcy or employment tribunals.
- Phone number contacts were 0844 417 1025 (landline) or 0300 330 1025 (Mobile)

In relation to questions asked, Helen made the following responses:

In response to a question about the contract, Helen explained that it was an advice services tender which the City Council put out for organisations to provide 6600 advice sessions plus a wide range of specialist services. The CAB had however committed to provide 1200 lower level advice sessions.

A further question was asked about general trends about advice needs, possibly in relation to the economic downturn. Helen commented that benefits always created the biggest workload, but this had increased in relation to under occupancy payments. She also said that the complexity of cases was increasing.

A query was raised about training offered to volunteers. Helen explained that there was a basic level of training for 3 months and then a further 3 months of generalist training. Specialist work would require even more training, but most volunteers wouldn't go down this route. Retired professionals often undertook the specialist roles. Volunteers of all levels were however welcomed.

A further query was raised about whether the new Universal Credit would lead to more caseload. Helen stated that she didn't expect to see Universal Credit in Leicester before 2017. She felt that there would be complications of bringing together a range of different payments, but a simplification of the system would be a good thing.

51. ALLANDALE ROAD / FRANCIS STREET

There were two elements to this item regarding Allandale Road / Francis Street, firstly feedback on the Christmas Market and the recently implemented parking scheme.

Christmas Market

A leaflet from the market promoters, FU Media was circulated which provided some details and feedback. It was noted that the about 4000 people attended the market, there were more stallholders this year than previous and more external traders. Retailers on the streets opened and took advantage of the additional footfall. Lessons learnt included, to start planning earlier, including applying for ward funding, a better layout of stalls, setting up a budget to fund the entertainment and better time planning in relation to the Queens Road market.

Residents commented that they had enjoyed attending the market.

Parking Scheme

Comments were sought from the meeting regarding the recently installed parking scheme which allowed for 3 hours free parking, along with some 20 minute parking slots.

A resident referred to a story in the Leicester Mercury which stated that 80 parking tickets had been given following the introduction of the scheme.

The new scheme was generally welcomed by Councillors and residents alike. Previous problems with commuters parking in the street were considerable and prevented shoppers having access to the street and this seemed to have been addressed. The signs identifying the 20 minute bays were also welcomed. It was however noted that residents of the streets still had some concerns.

52. HEALTHWATCH

Philip Parkinson, the interim Chair of the Leicester Healthwatch board was in attendance at the meeting to provide some details about the role and services that Healthwatch provided. He made the following points as part of his presentation:-

- Healthwatch bodies have been set up by the government as part of health and social care reforms and the tender to provide the Leicester Healthwatch was won by Voluntary Action Leicestershire.
- Philip said he was asked to set up the Leicester body, which had now been done, on a company limited by guarantee basis and a chair and board of directors had now been identified.
- The purpose of Healthwatch was to be an advocate, a strong voice for all those who used health and social care services, this included, GPs, A&E, acute and social services.
- Healthwatch had the role of participant observer at the Council's Health and Wellbeing Board as well as relevant health trust boards.
- It was a critical time for the needs of patients to be represented due to the fundamental changes in health services, the budget situation in local government and the range of challenges faced in society (e.g. aging population, obesity etc).
- Philip outlined the opportunities for joining Healthwatch and to receive information.

A resident asked about the role of participant observer. Philip said that a participant observer could participate actively in board meetings, robustly querying 'why', but did not vote.

A further question was asked about the influence that Healthwatch could have. Philip explained that public meetings had been undertaken, where a range of issues were raised (0845 surgery numbers, changes to prescriptions etc), these were presented to the clinical commissioning group. The challenge would be to see if improvements are made this year. Philip did however note that it was generally administrative, non-clinical matters which caused most frustrations.

53. POLICE UPDATE

PC Lou Whittle, was in attendance and gave the meeting details of crime figures for the past quarter in the ward.

- 17 burglaries from dwellings, using various means of entering.
- 6 other burglaries eg from sheds.
- 1 motorcycle and 3 car thefts – some of which were associated with burglaries
 - residents were recommended to keep keys upstairs.
- 23 thefts from motor vehicles, including reports of number plates being stolen, packs preventing this had previously been freely distributed, and this could be considered again.

- One robbery
- One incident of anti-social behaviour

A resident asked about powers to confiscate alcohol, he had noted particular problems in Knighton Park on Boxing Day. PC Whittle explained that for adults, alcohol could be confiscated only in nominated areas, but anywhere from under 18s. She encouraged people to report young people problem drinking in public areas.

A resident asked about patterns and locations regarding thefts from motor vehicles, and whether 'sting' operations could be used to address the problem. PC Whittle commented the thefts were sporadic in location, but generally took place overnight. An operation had previously taken place on Shanklin Drive where a crime trend had emerged, but initially officers would attend to an area when a problem is identified.

A further query was raised about robberies from individuals on Shanklin Drive. PC Whittle explained that there was a single incident, for which two boys, not from the local area had been arrested. She didn't think a trend was occurring, and problems were more likely in the Victoria Park area.

54. CITY WARDEN

Caroline Walsh, from the City Warden service was in attendance to provide details of the activities which the service had been undertaking and to seek comments from the public about other areas which needed addressing.

A resident commented that fly tipping seemed to occur irregularly at the 68th Leicester Scout hut off Cademan Close and it was requested that the tipped materials be removed when it did happen.

Councillor Moore noted that there was a lot of litter in the shrubbery by Thomas More Church, and asked if this could be looked into.

Issues around Shackerdale Road were discussed in particular, a graffiti tag on the shop shutters. Caroline said she would visit the shops to provide them with kits to remove the tags.

Parking issues in South Knighton Road were also mentioned, in particular, the law in relation to parking on the pavement. It was noted that there needed to be a proper obstruction before any Police enforcement could be undertaken.

A further parking issue in Knighton Church Road was mentioned with regard to people parking on the pavement, thus creating an access problem for big vehicles, which was leading to disturbance for residents early in the morning. Councillor Moore undertook to discuss the matter with the Council's Highways Section.

55. BUDGET

The following budget applications were submitted for consideration:-

Application 1

Applicant: 68th Leicester Scouts, Cademan Close (Jane Letten-Miller)

Amount: £1,695

Proposal: Repairs to Scout Hut.

Summary: The Scout Hut is of wooden construction and needs work to repaint and make it water proof.

Jane was in attendance and explained that it was 10 years since the hut was professionally decorated. Fund raising had provided £800 towards the cost. There were health and safety reasons why the work could not be done by volunteers.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be supported.

Application 2

Applicant: 63rd Leicester Scout Group (Mike Rowlinson)

Amount: £2000

Proposal: Group storage facility.

Summary: At the previous meeting, consideration was given to an application for £5000 to provide an external storage facility for the Scout Group. £3000 was approved with the remainder to be provided from a future year's budget. Members were asked, bearing in mind the amount left in the budget to consider whether it would be appropriate to provide the additional funding at this point.

Liam O'Halloran from the Scout Group was in attendance, he outlined the proposal and noted that £3200 had been fundraised to date towards the cost. It was intended to undertake more 'bag packing' sessions at supermarkets to raise the remaining amount required.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be supported.

Litter Bins

Councillor Moore explained that residents had contacted her about dog mess problems in certain alleyways and she felt that it would be good to seek residents' views at the meeting to see if there were suggestions for bin locations for bins where there were particular litter problems. These could be funded by the remaining budget monies.

Dawn Eagland, Area Services Manager, Waste Management explained the different bin options and the issues to be considered when providing new bins, such as people not wanting them near to their properties. Consultation with residents would need to be undertaken before new bins were installed.

A resident commented that a suitable location for a bin would be at the bus stop at the bottom of Highgate Drive.

RESOLVED:

That Ward Councillors discuss locations for bins with Dawn; draw up a list of possible locations and discuss with residents before taking forward.

Other matters

The Art House Project reported back their thanks for funding which paid for transport.

It was noted that there was just over £1000 left in the budget.

56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on 10 March 2014 at Overdale School, Eastcourt Road, Leicester, LE2 3YA.

57. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.