

Eyres Monsell Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Thursday, 26 February 2009

Held at: Eyres Monsell Community Centre, Hillsborough Road

Who was there:

Councillor Kim Blower

Councillor Rory Palmer (Chair)

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INFORMATION SHARING – ‘CAROUSEL’ SESSION

The following information stands were sited in the room. Members of the public visited the stands and were given an opportunity to meet Councillors, Council staff and the local Police and to bring enquiries and raise and issues.

WARD COUNCILLORS

Members of the public had the opportunity to talk to their Councillors.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Carole Blackburn, volunteer for Community Safety gave advice and leaflets on a range of issues.

CITY WARDENS

The local City Wardens explained their work and discussed particular issues with residents.

POLICE

Members of the local policing team were present to discuss particular issues with residents.

COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE (CLAC)

Sue Taylor from CLAC explained the work they did and advised on how to use the service.

HOUSING

Ian Stapleton, local Housing Manager discussed particular housing issues with residents.

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.

21. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor Palmer was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence from Councillors.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Blower declared that she would leave the room during consideration of the 100% Best Attendance budget application, as her children attended one of the schools that would benefit.

24. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Eyres Monsell Community Meeting, held on 18 November 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

25. PARKS INVESTMENT

Councillor Palmer gave an update regarding the provision of play equipment in the ward. He explained to the meeting that funding had been received for the ward from two sources – “Playbuilder,” a Government initiative to provide play equipment for 8-13 year-olds, and the Big Lottery Fund for schemes aimed at 2-8 years. Both of these would be used to provide play equipment for a wide age range. In total, there was just under £500,000 available.

Councillor Palmer explained what had already been done in planning the work, and the current position. The Parks Team had looked at possible sites in the ward and identified two options, 1) update existing sites, 2) find new sites. Any site had to match certain criteria such as flat land, accessibility and safety. Young people were being asked for their views on the type of equipment they wanted.

Areas that had been suggested included the Sturdee Road recreation ground (although there were concerns that this may not be big enough), the Exchange Park or the Spinney. Councillor Palmer suggested that it may be appropriate to have one larger area for all ages, across from the Exchange, as this was a suitable and visible area, and would be convenient when the proposed redevelopment of the Exchange was completed.

Members of the public made suggestions, including the following:

- Nearby residents need to be considered, such as if the area was placed near to the bungalows as the residents may be disturbed.
- There is nowhere to play in the middle of the estate, but there is plenty of space. (Councillor Palmer responded that there wasn't a site big enough to have a safe play area.)
- There are road safety concerns – appropriate crossing arrangements are needed. If the proposal to build it on the Exchange Park is agreed, it would be near to a bus lay-by.
- Land near the Scarlet Pimpernel may not be suitable due to narrow roads and dangerous parking.
- The area for very young children should have a safety fence.
- Investigate the possible provision of other activities, such as skateboarding, adventure course, freerunning complex.
- Consider the need for floodlights.
- Don't forget traditional equipment, such as swings, which are always popular.

Councillor Palmer said that gates, safety fencing and floodlights would be considered if necessary. He stated that work was being done to try to provide a freerunning facility, as there was demand for it. A group of young people were actively trying to get this set up. He invited a member of the freerunning group to explain to the meeting what it was and what they were trying to do.

The member of the group explained freerunning and Parkour. Parkour concentrated on the gymnastic side, showing off skills, and freerunning involved finding a means of escape across an urban environment, turning it into an obstacle course. They were trying to get funding to build a site near the bike track. It would include a variety of materials and equipment. Skills were built up in a gym to build confidence and to allow each person to assess risks. Councillor Palmer thanked him for the explanation and members of the public applauded him and wished the group well in their efforts.

Councillor Palmer said, with regard to the play area funding, that comments would be taken on board. Proposals would have to go through a proper planning process, but developments would be reported back to the meeting.

26. COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

Sue Taylor, Manager of the Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC), gave an outline of the work of the CLAC. She explained that it offered advice to City residents and covered, among other things, advice on debt, law, benefits, housing, citizens' advice, welfare, community care and employment. She stated that it had been based in Charles Street since May 2008. Surgeries were also held regularly in Eyres Monsell.

Members of the public asked the following questions and Sue answered as follows:

- 1) *Radio Leicester have been saying that Leicester has a Citizens' Advice Bureau, but I can find no contact details. I asked Radio Leicester to broadcast*

their number, but they haven't. What is the difference between CLAC and Citizens' Advice?

Citizens' Advice offer a first come first served service, and will only see the first four people who arrive. Their opening hours are limited and they are difficult to access, being up a flight of stairs. CLAC offers a full time service, 9.30-5 Monday to Friday and 9-12 Saturday. There is a lift, so it is easy to access. We will look at publicising the service through Radio Leicester. We also have leaflets. Our phone number is 2426720.

- 2) *Can we have leaflets in community centres and the housing office?*
Yes, we will distribute leaflets and posters.

Councillor Palmer thanked Sue and said that he had visited the CLAC and it offered an excellent service. He also said that it was good to have the local surgery as well.

27. POLICE UPDATE

Dave Budd, Community Initiative Co-Ordinator, introduced members of the local policing team, and Corporal Jill Hilliard, Acting Team Leader, gave a brief update on work in the ward. She explained that the team worked with other local agencies to tackle issues. A newsletter was shortly to be sent to every home in the ward explaining what had been happening.

Jill said that they relied on people keeping them informed so that they could gather intelligence to deal with issues. Currently, the team was concentrating on antisocial behaviour in the area of Swinford Avenue and Featherstone Drive. They were also looking at Pasley Road, Spendlow, the Spinney and the Exchange. In the future, the team would look at areas where it could work with the City Warden.

There had recently been a "Positive Action Week," which had included high visibility patrols, number plate recognition vehicles and a mobile unit for residents to talk to the team. There were some good results from this week – arrests, fixed penalty notices issued, stop searches, alcohol confiscated, tickets for vehicle offences, vehicles recovered for no insurance and action against other nuisance vehicles.

Members of the public made the following comments and asked the following questions and they were answered as below:

- 1) *A wall near the shops on Swinford Avenue should be removed, as it encourages antisocial behaviour. Gates there also need to be kept shut.*
The police are aware of this and are dealing with it. Hopefully the wall will come down soon. The shop owners have been told to keep the gates shut and fix broken lights.
- 2) *Residents weren't aware that a mobile unit had been to Safeway, so we didn't visit it.*
The unit will visit several places in the next six months, and officers are regularly at the housing office. The newsletter will tell people where and when they will be visiting.

3) *When we ring the office we always get an answer machine.*

Officers spend most of their time outside, doing their job. They deal with messages when they come back.

4) *The police report is very informative and readable.*

Councillor Palmer thanked the members of the team and said that Eyres Monsell had an excellent service, with which the estate should be pleased.

28. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND CITY WARDENS UPDATE

Barbara Whitcombe, City Wardens Manager, and Jessica Phillips and Maria Mahmood, City Wardens were present to give an update on their work and the work of Environmental Services in the ward over the last six months.

Barbara gave a presentation and handed out a newsletter that showed achievements and comparisons between Eyres Monsell against the rest of the city. This covered a wide range of services, including graffiti, flyposting litter, nuisance dogs, flytipping, licensing, abandoned vehicles, overpainted cable boxes and pest control.

Jessica gave an update on what she had been doing in the ward in addition to dealing with the issues listed above, such as attending estate inspections, talking to people face to face, dealing with fly tipping, and trying to resolve problems of graffiti at the old football changing rooms. She said that she was able to deal with dog fouling, but that she relied on residents giving her details so that she could identify offenders. She also said that regular fly-posters were being prosecuted. She had also had success in encouraging premises to clear up dumped rubbish.

The meeting was informed that Jessica had been temporarily promoted and that Maria Mahmood would be taking her place in the ward.

In response to a member of the public's complaint about items being left for weeks waiting to be collected and disposed of outside their home, Jessica said that, even if an issue is not specifically part of her job, it could still be reported to her and she would notify the relevant department to do something about it.

A member of the public complained that dog bins were always overflowing and asked if more bins could be installed. Jessica replied that there were no current plans to increase the number, as there was no budget for more. Also, they were set on fire regularly. Barbara said that patrols were being increased.

Councillor Palmer thanked the officers for their work and reminded the meeting that Eyres Monsell was fortunate to have a City Warden, as not all wards had one yet.

29. WARD ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer, gave an update on progress with the Ward Action Plan. He stated that the main priority identified was the Exchange and its future, and work was ongoing, although the current economic situation could have an effect.

Jerry said that another issue was graffiti, particularly around the Exchange. He said that constantly removing it and it returning again was not a permanent way of dealing with the problem, and other methods were needed, such as giving a creative output for people.

The third issue was antisocial behaviour. Feedback from the meetings was passed on to the police Joint Action Group (JAG) and it was included in their priority plan for the ward.

Councillor Palmer explained progress with the Exchange redevelopment. For the last 18 months Councillors and officers had been working on the scheme. Talks had taken place with the owners of the Invincible. The Council was continuing with the proposals, but the current recession was likely to delay things, due to the lack of investment possibilities. The Council's Cabinet was to formally approve the proposal shortly, but aspects of this report were private, as it involved sensitive financial matters. Approval of this report would then allow the Council to move to the next stage and submit a planning application. Councillor Palmer emphasized that it would take a long time to complete the redevelopment, but it would be the most important thing to happen to the estate in many years.

In response to public questions, Councillor Palmer stated that no previous planning application from the Invincible site owners had previously been submitted or refused, contrary to what people had heard. It was important to include the Invincible site in the proposals, to ensure continuity of trade for the shops, and to deal with the site which was an eyesore. Members of the public stated that they were unhappy about the length of time it was taking, but Councillor Palmer reiterated that it was never going to be done quickly, due to many factors, some of which were out of the Councils' control, such as the wishes of the Invincible owners; also the recession could hinder the process. The option was to take the time necessary, or to stop the process and allow the site to become even more run down.

30. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGETS

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer introduced applications for funding from the Community Meeting budgets.

Having declared an interest in the 100% Best Attendance item, Councillor Blower left the meeting during consideration of the applications.

With regard to the bids for the Saffron Fete, Jerry explained that the ward was recommended to contribute 30% of the cost, as the bids were also to be considered by the Freeman Community Meeting.

An additional bid was presented at the meeting for a summer soccer academy and was considered by the meeting.

The meeting agreed to support the bids as follows:

- 1) *Saffron Fete Committee/Saffron Community Enterprises Ltd*
Fairground ride, additional insurance & professional stewards
AGREED: 30% of the total cost of £1700, to be funded from the Ward Community Cohesion fund.
- 2) *Saffron Fete Committee/Saffron Community Enterprises Ltd*
Various items including first aid, van and equipment hire, mobile toilets, administration and advertising
AGREED: 30% of the total cost of £1400, to be funded from the Ward Community fund.
- 3) *Welford Road Local Policing Unit – “Delivering Service Excellence”*
Award scheme – a monthly award of a £20 voucher to anyone who works with or for the Welford Road Local Policing Unit and its area.
AGREED: £50.00 to be funded from the Ward Action Plan budget.
- 4) *Horticultural and Crafts Show/Sue Green*
Funding for Horticultural Show
AGREED: £500 to be funded from the Ward Community Fund.
- 5) *Police & Community Support Group – “100% Best Attendance”*
To encourage school attendance by awarding a trip to the Odeon Cinema
AGREED: £500 to be funded from the Ward Community Fund.
- 6) *Lighthouse Learning – “Lets Talk”*
After-school sessions at Eyres Monsell and Rolleston Primary Schools for parents/carers and children in Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2.
AGREED: £2,250 to be funded from the Ward Action Plan budget.
- 7) *Leicester City Council Sports Services and LCFC Football in the Community Trust – “Summer Soccer Academy”*
To provide young people with skills based activities to achieve a level of social cohesion and diversionary activity.
AGREED: £1500 to be funded from the Ward Action Plan budget.

31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting was informed that the date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

32. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 1) Councillor Palmer thanked a resident, Mr Bolton, for volunteering to overpaint the cable boxes. He said that this would make a difference to the community.
- 2) A member of the public said that the Council sent out too many unnecessary monitoring forms and didn't spend enough time in dealing with problems (particularly housing problems). Councillor Palmer said that the new "One Contact" system for the Council should help address this issue.
- 3) A member of the public said that potholes on Sturdee Road were getting very bad. Councillor Palmer replied that there was a programme across the city to repair them, and to let the Councillors know of any particular problems, as the Council may not always be aware of where they were.
- 4) A member of the public said that, as part of the extension of the Glen Parva Young Offenders' Institute, it was planned to build a temporary access road through part of the ward. He asked if the Ministry of Justice could be instructed to contribute to the community in compensation, such as providing floodlights or cameras, or funding towards a skate park or similar. Councillor Palmer agreed that this would be a good idea and that the government could be approached to this effect. He agreed to talk to planning officers.
- 5) A member of the public raised the issue of the number 87 bus not being able to keep to its timetable due to traffic problems at Aylestone Drive/Glenhills Way during busy times. There was concern that if problems continued, the users may risk losing the service again. Councillor Palmer said he would ask for proper monitoring to be done at the site and to see if anything could be done. He pointed out that some time ago, there had been proposals, as part of the work on the Pork Pie roundabout, but that they had been rejected by some Councillors. He suggested that transport issues could be considered at a future meeting.

33. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.04pm.

