

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 7 July 2009

Held at: Avenue Primary School, Avenue Road Extension

Who was there:

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| Councillor Phil Gordon |
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| Councillor Patrick Kitterick |
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INFORMATION FAIR

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 issues.

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| <p>Ward Councillors and General Information</p> <p>Members of the public were given an opportunity to talk to their local Councillors or raise general queries.</p> | <p>Britain in Bloom</p> <p>Graham Woods from Parks Services was present to answer residents' queries relating to Britain in Bloom and the Parks Services.</p> |
| <p>Leicestershire Police</p> <p>PC Stephen Douglas, from Welford Road Local Policing Unit was present and members of the public could talk to him before and after the meeting.</p> | <p>Highways and Transport</p> <p>Andrew Thomas, Head of City Development and Chris Hunt, Transport Strategy were available during the Information Fair to respond to residents about any Highway related queries.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Craig Bodsworth, City Warden and Malcom Grange, Head of Street Scene Enforcement were also present to talk to residents during the Information Fair.</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.

60. ELECTION OF CHAIR

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

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Follett.

62. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Castle Community Meeting, dated 12 March 2009, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No such declarations were made.

64. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Andrew Thomas, Head of Traffic Management was introduced to the meeting and gave a presentation on highways issues in Leicester and within the Castle Ward.

The main points in Andrew's presentation were as follows:

Parking

- The Council were aware that there was a general lack of parking in the area;
- There was competition for road space – there were Victorian Roads in Leicester and the Castle Ward that were not designed for cars;
- Enforcement sometimes presented difficulties – in the past enforcement signs had been stolen;
- People who parked on the pavements and double yellow lines caused further problems;
- Civil Enforcement Officers could issue parking tickets;
- Police powers could be used under certain circumstances, for example where an obstruction was being caused; and
- Measures were available to address specific problems. These included:
 1. Verge hardening;
 2. Lay-bys;

3. Residents' parking schemes: Andrew explained that a residents consultation in South Highfields had demonstrated that a Residents Parking Scheme in the area was wanted, but a similar consultation in Clarendon Park had shown that such a scheme was not wanted there; and
4. A system of 'H Marking', on the roads in front of peoples' homes so that only the householder could park there.

Speeding Traffic

- The Council were in the process of introducing 20 mph speed limits in residential areas;
- In Avenue Road Extension, bollards which had been designed to look like children would be installed and the road would be monitored to see if these were effective in slowing down traffic;
- The council could carry out a speed survey if residents felt there were problems with speeding;
- Vehicle Activated Signs - Andrew explained that these were effective, although some residents were concerned that they did not work;
- Speed cameras and traffic calming could also be used to slow down traffic; and
- Andrew added that during the Information Fair a member of the public had highlighted the issue of speeding traffic on Queens Road.

Public Transport

- The Council encouraged greater bus usage – by 2026 it was estimated that there would be a 25% increase in the number of houses in Leicester and the Council needed to find ways to cope with this. Andrew added that the Council would welcome a tram service in the south of the city;
- The bus companies were privately owned and as such the Council had limited influence over them. However, as part of the Quality Bus Partnership, the Council had regular meetings with Arriva and First Bus; and
- The Council provided subsidies on routes that were not economically viable and some of the income raised from parking enforcement was put towards concessionary bus fares and subsidies.

Condition of the roads and potholes

In respect of the condition of roads and footways, Andrew also mentioned that there was a Rapid Response Team, who could be called out to deal with urgent problems. Members of the public could report problems by phoning 0116 2527001.

Andrew opened the floor for comments and questions, and the following points were made:

- *Can something be done about the traffic lights at the London Road/Victoria Park Junction because drivers have to stop at the lights after they have entered the roundabout?*

Andrew responded that he would look into this and if the questioner left their details he would send a written response.

- *On Queen's Road, block paving has been dug up by a Utility Company and replaced with tarmac!*

Andrew explained that the Utility Companies would normally be expected to reinstate to the original finish and he suspected that the work was still on-going and that the finish was a temporary measure.

- *An unofficial taxi rank has appeared outside a business on the Queens Road.*

Andrew responded that he would raise this issue with the Licensing Department.

- *Is it possible to arrange for an integrated bus pass for both Arriva and First Bus?*

Andrew explained that the Council had tried without success to get an integrated service. The bus companies were run for profit and were in competition with each other. Councillor Kitterick added that the Council had also tried to persuade the bus companies to introduce 'Smart Cards' but had not met with any success either.

- *There are already a lot of cars in the Clarendon Park area and there are more planning applications to build extra houses and flats. Does the Planning Department consult with Highways?*

Andrew explained that the Planning Service did consult with the Highways Department, but the Highways Department could not always influence developments as much as they would like.

- *Are people allowed to park on footways?*

Andrew and Councillor Kitterick jointly replied that generally speaking vehicles should not be parked on a footway as this impeded pedestrians. The Police had a responsibility to deal with any vehicle that was causing an obstruction, and the Council could take enforcement action against footway parking where there were double yellow lines or single yellow lines (if the vehicle was parked on the footway within the restricted times).

- *There is a GP surgery on Queens' Road where people park very selfishly. There is a car park for patients' use but they park outside my house and block my driveway.*

Andrew responded that in this case, 'H Marking' might help, although the Civil Enforcement Officer might issue a parking ticket because he would not know whether any car was legitimately allowed to park there, but the householder could in

turn appeal against the ticket and would receive a refund. Andrew also suggested that if the Police were in the area they might be able to go to the surgery in question and take appropriate action where any vehicle was causing an obstruction. Andrew explained that the Local Authorities had been given powers to use 'H Marks' and asked members of the public to contact him if they were interested in having one outside their home.

- *The Stoneygate Conservation Area is within the Castle Ward. What is the policy for replacing pavements with tarmac within the area?*

Councillor Kitterick commented that this was also an issue in West Avenue where trees had forced up paving stones. To alleviate any possible trip hazard the buckling paving stones had been replaced with tarmac. Andrew added that it was difficult to find a solution to removing such trip hazards and that the Council tried to provide a safe footway but had a limited budget to work within. Councillor Kitterick explained that there was no Highway Policy for Conservation Areas, to deal with specific matters such as this.

- *Should we spend Council money on coloured road markings on bus lanes?*

Andrew explained that the markings were based on national design standards and were designed to encourage people to respect bus lanes. It was felt that clear markings were needed so that there was no excuse for drivers who violate the bus lane.

Andrew was thanked for his presentation.

65. BUDGET APPLICATIONS

Kate Owen, Member Support Officer presented the Community Meeting Budget, explained that five budget applications had been received and these were as follows:

1. Leicester City Council Festivals and Events Team requested £2,000 from the Ward Community Fund for the Leicester Castle Park Heritage and Arts Festival. The application form for this bid was attached at Appendix B on the agenda.

Residents questioned why a section of the Council were applying to the Committee for funding and stated that this money may be needed for local projects. It was further suggested that the Terms of Reference for the Community Meeting should be changed so that such bids could not be considered in the future.

Councillor Kitterick explained that the funding would enhance the event by providing additional activities and that there was a considerable amount of community involvement in this festival. Councillor Kitterick added that the Community Meeting and old Area Committee budgets had never been spent in full and that Members welcomed further bids from community groups who might benefit from Community Meeting funding.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the funding application be supported to the value of £2,000.

2. Parks Services and St Andrews Play Association requested £1,213.41 from the Community Fund to provide a new pedestrian access gate and a pathway at the main vehicular entrance to Thirlmere Gardens. The application form for this bid was attached at Appendix B2 on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the funding application be supported to the value of £1213.41.

3. The St Andrews Tenants and Residents Association, De Montfort University and Groundwork submitted a joint funding application to request £1321 from the Community Fund for a Community Allotment Project. The funding application for this bid was attached at Appendix B3 on the agenda.

Kate explained that the total bid was for £3963 and had been split between three Wards, the other two being Westcotes and Braunstone Park/Rowley Fields Wards.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the funding application be supported to the value of £1,321.

4. Kate explained that a funding application for a summer multi-cultural cricket camp, which was attached at Appendix B4 on the agenda, had been withdrawn as the applicant had been encouraged to apply for Corporate funding.
5. The Hinckley Road Joint Action Group had requested £576 from the Castle Community Cohesion Fund for "Respect Your Neighbourhood" signage: 'Safer routes for students'. The application form for this bid was attached in Appendix B5 on the agenda.

Kate explained that this was a joint project and the total cost of the bid was £3468, but £576 was requested from the Castle Ward Community Meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £576.

A resident questioned the community meeting budget process and Kate explained that:

- Each Ward had been allocated £17,000
- This money was split into three categories:

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|---------------------|---------|
| a. Ward Action Plan | £10,000 |
| b. Community Fund | £5,000 |

c. Community Cohesion £2,000

- There was a Ward Action Plan in process. Residents had been asked to give their views of their most important concerns and issues in Castle Ward and from this an Action Plan had been written. Funding bids to this budget needed to be relevant to the priorities identified in the action plan.
- Bids to the community fund needed to benefit people who lived in the Ward.
- Bids to the Community Cohesion fund needed to address community cohesion issues within the Ward.

Residents questioned why the money didn't go towards funding a nursing home or to fund a youth club.

Councillor Kitterick explained that funding for the above items was allocated from the main council budget and the £17,000 budget was for small projects that may not receive funding from the mainstream budget.

| Action | Officer Identified | Deadline |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| That the supported budget applications be submitted to the Cabinet Lead for final approval. | Kate Owen, Member Support Officer | As soon as possible |

66. WARD ACTION PLAN UPDATE

An update on the Ward Action Plan was not given at this time.

67. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.54 pm.