

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 17 January 2011

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

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor John Allen

Councillor Caroline Scuplak

INFORMATION SHARING – ‘INFORMATION FAIR’ 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 service representatives.

Home Energy Office	Police Issues
Officers were available to give low cost measures energy advice details referral to grant-aided schemes	Local Police Officers were present to report on crime figures, and for people to discuss issues in the Ward or raise general queries.
Community Safety Team	Handyperson Service
Officers gave advice on how to protect themselves and support against domestic violence, vehicle crime, burglary and hate crime	Officer were available to talk about the service for people with minor home maintenance jobs.
Revenues and Benefits	Kirminton Gardens Play Area
Officers were available to promote benefit changes in April 2011 and future years.	Officers from Parks and Green Spaces were present to discuss a planning application for a new play area.
Local Involvement Network (LINK)	
Officers were present to raise awareness and gather community issues in relation to health and social care services.	

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.

27. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Scuplak was elected as Chair for the meeting.

The Ward Councillors then introduced themselves to the meeting.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

29. 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 Scuplak declared a personal interest in the budget applications submitted by the Community Association Management Committee (CAMC), as she was Chair of the CAMC. She stated that she would not take part in the discussion around the application.

Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in the budget applications submitted by the Community Association Management Committee (CAMC), as he was Secretary of the CAMC. He stated that he would not take part in the discussion around the application.

Attendees at the meeting informed Councillors Scuplak and Allen they were happy for them to remain in the room when discussions took place.

30. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th October 2010 were approved as a correct record.

31. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 18(a) Housing Management and Refurbishment of Properties

Councillor Allen asked as to why some properties were being refurbished and others were not. It was explained that the layout design of some bungalows had caused some problems with the installation of kitchens.

Chrissie Field had reported at the last meeting that a total of 29 properties were outstanding. This was corrected to 30 properties. She reported that all but 9 of the

properties were completed, with 4 in progress. She reported that some tenants had refused to have their properties refurbished.

Minute 19 (a) Action Points

(i) Mike Pears, Highways Maintenance, Leicester City Council, updated the meeting on works carried out and solved on 13th January 2011 to drainage problems in the grassed area in Croyland Green, near to house number 20-22. The sewer was unblocked and found to have no structural problems.

(ii) Mike Pears, Highways Maintenance, Leicester City Council, informed the meeting that more information would be required regarding the access area at Croyland Green. He also stated that parking issues can sometimes be improved by works carried out under the Local Environment Works programme, such as layby construction.

32. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Lee Storer and a colleague from Passenger and Transport Services (LCC) gave a verbal overview of community transport opportunities in Leicester.

Community transport provided minibuses to community groups who provided a service to the elderly or disabled people. Buses had been converted for wheelchair use and had tail lifts that go down to ground level and not ramps. The minibuses are multi-adapting but can hold 16 people if seated.

During the presentation Lee Storer gave the following information and responses to questions:

- Hire costs of the minibuses is £16 per day excluding fuel, but groups have to provide their own driver. Drivers should have D1 on a clean driving licence to be allowed to drive a minibus. The Midas Training course was available to obtain a D1 and is valid for three years. The meeting was informed that there was no age limit (oldest or youngest) to drive a minibus, the only requirement being a D1 was on the licence. The age limit would be investigated as confirmation that this was the case.
- Groups often had a shortage of drivers. The meeting was informed that volunteer drivers were available for groups at a cost of £33 per day. Also, other community groups might be approached for the loan of a driver.
- Breakdown and recovery would be the responsibility of Leicester City Council should this occur, and Community Transport would be the point of call for advice/issues during the day. Insurance is included but users would be asked to pay up to £500 excess in the event of an incident. Should groups wish to use the minibuses then they should send a constitution to LCC Transport to register with the service. A membership fee of £12 was payable but groups are then able to use the services as many times as they wanted to.
- For drivers a test would need to be undertaken prior to hiring a minibus. The test lasts for approximately 1 hour.

- Equipment was also provided for securing wheelchairs in the minibuses. An additional test is available for providing instruction on how to secure a wheelchair, lasting approximately ½ hour and costs around £19.
- The meeting was advised that should a community group wish to book a minibus, they should do so one month in advance to avoid disappointment. There was higher demand during the summer months, but Community Transport could use vehicles from other sections to cover demand.
- A question was asked if the service could be extended to include groups for young people who did not have access to a vehicle, but the service is limited to the elderly and disabled. The Chair informed the residents that funding could be applied for to take a younger group out, and encouraged such groups to apply for funding from the Ward Community Meeting.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
The Community Meeting to be informed of the age limit for drivers.	Francis Connolly	4 th April 2011

33. UPDATE ON POLICING ISSUES

Sergeant Danny Graham and PCSO James Edwards were present to update the meeting on policing issues in Thurncourt.

Sgt. Graham gave a verbal update on crime statistics in the area from 4 October 2010 over a three month period with a comparison to the same three month period in 2009. The Force published all crime statistics its website on which the following figures are available:

- Recorded crime is down 1%
- Robbery is down 100% (from 1 to 0)
- Vehicle crime is down 36.4%
- Violence is down 58.8%
- Anti-social behaviour is down 9.7%
- Burglary has seen an increase up 22.2%

From 1/1/2010 to 31/12/2010 there were 593 crimes recorded. This was down from 1,076 in 2009, a drop in 483 crimes. In 2010 there were 73 dwelling burglaries compared to 137 in 2009 – 64 less victims.

Theft of cars decreased to 18 in 2010, compared to 26 in 2009. Theft from cars fell from 39 in 2009 to 21 in 2010.

Incidents involving drugs (supply / possession / intent to supply) reduced from 40 in 2009 to 12 in 2010.

A city resource team from Hinckley Road Police Station including plain clothes police and CID had been working in Thurncourt for two months, over which time burglary

incidents had reduced. No one person was identified for the burglaries as there were several methods of operation, though several arrests were made and persons charged. The meeting was asked to note that houses targeted were usually ones without alarms or fake alarms. Residents were advised to keep bushes to the front and back of houses to a minimum, to use spotlights, and to make properties as hard as possible to break into.

Persons responsible for anti-social behaviour had been identified and on occasion have apologised for their behaviour which have been accepted. These occurred at the time of the English Defence League protests.

Around Halloween and Bonfire Night, policing was good and everything went well. There were issues on Sudbury Green when a large unmanaged fire was lit. Police will revisit the area in the summer to hold discussions with residents to help prevent a repeat of it.

One incident of hate crime was reported when a lady and her three year-old daughter had snowballs thrown at them and were taunted. The appellants were identified through local sources and received a police reprimand.

In answer to questions, Sgt. Graham suggested the reduction in figures was due to drives to reduce crime, better targeting and working with known offenders.

Sgt. Graham would soon be moving to larger premises, but that further equipment to accommodate the move was required. Priorities for the area include:

- To reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour in conjunction with Housing.
- Thurnby Lodge and Willowbrook schools have reported incidents of vandalism. This has occurred at weekends and early evenings and would be worked on.
- There have been increased incidents on Thurncourt Road of stone throwing by youths at passing buses. Once identified the police would visit and talk to parents.

Residents were urged to contact the Police with information (which can be given anonymously), for help or to report incidents. Residents expressed their appreciation of the support from police in Thurncourt, particularly around the time of the EDL march, and hoped this would continue.

Sgt. Graham spoke about cuts in the police force. £13 million savings would be made in the budget this year, and a further £19 million in savings over the next four years. Neighbourhood policing and community support was not at present being included. Sgt. Graham also stated the EDL march would not have been managed without neighbourhood policing. Sgt. Graham mentioned there would be changes to the way police administered and responded to 999 calls. More information would be brought to the next Community Meeting.

Sgt. Graham was asked whether it was illegal for people to go cold calling in areas where there were signs asking them not to do so. He informed the meeting that cold calling was not illegal and was not enforceable, but signs were merely advisable to

put people off. He advised if people were suspicious of a caller, they should telephone the police.

Meeting attendees suggested a letter should be sent to the Chief Constable in support of neighbourhood policing, and how the work that they put into communities was valued.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Information on changes to the administration and response to 999 calls.	Sgt. Danny Graham	4 th April 2011
Councillors to write to the Chief Constable on how valued neighbourhood policing was in communities. A copy of the letter would be sent to Chief Supt. Rob Nixon.	Francis Connolly	4 th April 2011

34. CITY WARDEN SERVICE

Darren Evans, (City Warden, Leicester City Council) gave a presentation to the meeting, and included the following points:

- Averill Road – following local complaints, damaged cars and stored tyres have been removed.
- St Austell flats – bins that were previously left out after collections and abandoned bins have been taken away.
- The graffiti project saw the removal of graffiti from items in Willowbrook park, for example, benches, bins, walls.
- Willowbrook Park saw the level of dog fouling fall. It is thought the recent bad weather may have forced people to walk their dogs on Thurncourt Road, Ocean Road and Sudbury Green where the problem was worsening. A project to run from January to June 2011 (one of two) would see increased patrols in these areas. Also letters would be sent to each home in the area.
- General patrols would be undertaken to include the following:
 - Thurnby Lodge shops
 - Willowbrook and Thurnby Lodge Schools
 - Willowbrook Park and open space.
- A-Boards had become a problem for pedestrians on Uppingham Road and Humberstone Road. A city-wide project in relation to addressing some of the problems caused by A-Boards was to take place.
- City Wardens have worked jointly with the fire service to tackle the problem of cars parked illegally near to the Merlyn Vaz Centre. The project was to educate the public on parking dangerously. The Council proposes to introduce yellow lines in June.
- Bins on streets would be an ongoing project for the remainder of the year.

- Other projects last year included the Peace Rally before and after the EDL march.
- Objectives for Thurncourt in 2011 include:
 - Recycle point education
 - Littering and dog fouling near Thurnby Lodge shops
 - Willowbrook and Thurnby Lodge school young warden project
 - Sunbury Green dog fouling project 1
 - Ocean Road dog fouling project 2
 - Working with the Community Centre
 - Joint projects with the police, for example Sunbury Green bonfire
 - Joint working with TARA groups and local resident projects.

Darren Evans then gave the following replies to questions:

- If people were parked in front of dropped kerbs then the police should be called.
- Fixed penalties would be given to people who allowed their dogs to foul.
- It would be useful if people could give him the times persistent offenders took their pets out, so he could investigate.
- Retailers on The Parkway have been putting shop waste into the bins. Darren agreed to investigate the complaint.
- Dog mess could now be put in any waste bin, and that a campaign to educate dog owners of this was to be launched. An article will be prepared and sent to Housing News and Leicester Link. Bins for dog waste could be provided through funding if there was a gap in the area, but the costs were usually high. The Chair asked that the previous cost of installing dog bins in the area be investigated.
- Phase 2 of the dog fouling project covered Ocean Road. People had been spoken to and asked to keep their dogs in and not be allowed to roam freely. Letters would be sent to all residents on Ocean Road, and covert operations would be undertaken on a daily basis.
- Some time was spent working away from the ward and undertaking training as part of the mandate for the role of a city warden. Members queried the reasons for this and asked if the time spent away could be reduced as they felt the City Warden's time would be more effective if they were in the Ward for longer. The meeting was advised that the time spent away was not ongoing week on week, and wardens were now at the point where they could stay on the ward.

Further discussion took place over the publicising in the Leicester Mercury of the reduction on street cleaning. Also the street cleaning of gutters and kerbs could not be carried out due to cars parked in the streets. It was agreed that men on foot were more effective in keeping the streets clean. Members stated that concerns should be placed in a letter to the Leader, and City Cleansing be invited to the next meeting and given the opportunity to answer questions at the meeting.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Complaints regarding dog fouling to be investigated by the	Darren Evans	

City Warden.		
Complaints regarding retailers using street bins for shop waste to be investigated by the City Warden	Darren Evans	
Investigate the previous cost of installing dog waste bins in Thurncourt.	Francis Connolly	4 th April 2011
Letter to be sent to the Leader regarding concern over the cuts in street cleansing.	Francis Connolly	4 th April 2011
City Cleansing to be invited to the next Community Meeting to answer questions regarding the level of service in Thurncourt.	Francis Connolly	4 th April 2011

35. HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Mike Pears and Steve Warrington from (Regeneration, Highways and Transportation, Leicester City Council) were present to discuss issues raised at the last meeting.

Steve Warrington gave an update on progress with the bid for safety works to the junction of The Parkway and Havencrest Drive. At this meeting it was agreed that as a remedial measure, give-way signs, road markings and double yellow markings would be installed, and it was proposed this would be included in a bid for funding from LPT3. An application for funding had also been submitted by the Road Safety Team, Leicester City Council and this was discussed under Item 9, Ward Budget 2010/11. Following up on a complaint regarding the slabbed footway on The Parkway, a Highway Management Officer had assessed the area which he found to be in a reasonable condition. There were cracked slabs but these were stable. The footways are inspected twice a year in the City and if they deteriorate further and exceed intervention levels they will be repaired. Slabs were also repaired if there is a difference in the levels of adjacent slabs of 25mm or more or if they were moving significantly.

Also discussed at the meeting were issues concerning parking around grassed areas in Thurncourt. With the increase in the number of cars parking, roads were deemed to be too narrow in parts for traffic, particularly lorries, to pass parked vehicles. It was asked if grassed areas could be reduced and parking bays introduced to enable traffic to move on roads easily. It was stated that £900,000 Council Housing Revenue was available for environmental improvements, and this was allocated based on the number of council properties in the ward, and proposals could be put forward on how this money should be spent. The meeting was asked to note the money would not cover all problems but would be spend on specific ones with the biggest problems.

It was pointed out by residents that some areas in the ward were mainly privately owned properties and not council properties, and would also benefit if improvement works were carried out. If a council tenant lived in an area which was mainly owner occupied then works in such areas would not be prioritised. The Chair suggested the topic be brought back to a future Community Meeting as an agenda item to discuss priority areas and enable people to decide what they would want to spend the money on.

36. WARD BUDGET 2010/11

Francis Connolly, Member Support Officer, introduced this item of business. He noted that there was £11,199 left in the budget prior to the meeting.

Members considered the following applications:

Thurnby Lodge and District Community Association – request for £500 to provide two wheelchairs to be used within the Community Centre in emergencies.

It was confirmed that one wheelchair would be located at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre and the other stored at Ocean Road Community Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £500 be allocated from the Ward Community Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

The Seabrook Club (Tuesday Club) – request for £500 to take senior citizens of the Seabrook Club on a trip in the Spring.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £500 be allocated from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods, the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and the Leader of the Council.

The Tuesday Bingo Club – request for £300 to assist with rental costs.

The applicant was present and explained how both the Tuesday and Friday Bingo clubs helped to generate funds for the Community Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £300 be allocated from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods, the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and the Leader of the Council.

Leicester City Council – Road Safety Team – request for £4,250 for a proposed road traffic accident remedial scheme.

Members explained that this proposal had been previously suggested in light of the accident rate at the junction of Havencrest Drive and The Parkway. Remedial measures that were proposed to be taken as part of the application included the provision of a Give Way sign and road markings, newspaper advertisement and associated legal costs.

Officers explained that the scheme would be included in a list of bids as part of Leicester's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3). It was stated that the outcome of funding would not be known until at least Summer 2011, and that there was no guarantee in the current economic climate that funding for any scheme would be forthcoming. Funding from the Community Meeting would guarantee that the scheme would be able to be completed far sooner.

Members and those present supported the application but with the condition that should the scheme be funded via LTP3, the money pledged from the Community Meeting be refunded.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above condition, the application be supported and a sum of £4,250 be allocated from the Ward Action Plan Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

The Friday Bingo Club – request for £300 to assist with rental costs.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £300 be allocated from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods, the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and the Leader of the Council.

The Chit Chat Club – request for £550 to support weekly outings for club members.

Councillor Scuplak felt that this application extended the use of the community centre, which was seen as a safe and welcoming place for residents to congregate.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £550 be allocated from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods, the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and the Leader of the Council.

Thurnby Lodge Lunch Club – request for £500 to purchase a chest freezer.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £500 be allocated from the Ward Community Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

Wednesday Club – request for £400 towards running costs.

RESOLVED:

That the application be supported and a sum of £400 be allocated from the Ward Community Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

Emergency Repairs to Internal Ceiling of the Willowbrook Activity Centre – request for £2,000 to cover materials and installation costs.

The applicant was present and reported that the Activity Centre was supplementing the work with £510 generated themselves.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above condition, the application be supported and a sum of £2,000 be allocated from the Ward Action Plan Fund budget, subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

37. DISCUSSION ON ELECTED MAYOR ARRANGEMENTS

Information was distributed to meeting attendees in connection with the changes to new executive arrangements. No discussion was taken on this item.

38. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

An item was taken by Councillors to discuss a planning application for a proposed play area. Adrian Edge, Parks and Green Spaces, informed the meeting that Leicester City Council was successful in a bid for Lottery Funding for play areas in three key areas in the City – New Parks, Thurncourt and Eyres Monsell. After consultation with local residents the preferred option was to develop a play area at Kerminton Gardens, and consultation with Willowbrook and Thurnby Lodge Primary Schools helped to identify preferred play equipment for the area. A planning application has been submitted and the detailed proposal was available for viewing on the council website.

The area would take up approximately a quarter of the green so would still leave plenty of open space, and would cater for 2-8 year-olds. The target for spend was £60,000 by the end of March 2011. Residents were concerned that the area would

become a target for anti-social behaviour. Adrian Edge explained that this was likely to be minimised in light of a high number of surrounding properties, and the equipment was for smaller children which should deter older children from loitering around it. The equipment would be inspected twice a week by parks officers and funding was available to repair equipment. A sign would also be located in the area with a contact telephone number to report any issues. Adrian circulated comments sheets and details on how to access the planning application on the website.

39. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

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