

Aylestone Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Tuesday, 22 January 2013

**Held at: Gilmorton Community Rooms, Hopyard Close, Leicester,
LE2 9GY**

Who was there:

Councillor Adam Clarke

Councillor Nigel Porter

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.

<p>Ward Councillors and General Information</p> <p>The public had an opportunity to talk to their local councillors or raise general queries</p>	<p>Community Payback Scheme</p> <p>There was an opportunity to receive details of the scheme whereby assistance for community projects could be undertaken by offenders who had been given community service as part of their sentence. Details of how to register projects with the scheme were also available.</p>
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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.

160. CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Porter announced that he would be Chair for the meeting and he welcomed everyone to the meeting.

161. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Rev Appleby, Alison Bannatyne, Anne Hayto and Mike Turner.

162. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they might have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Clarke declared an Other Disclosable Interest in community budget items as he had been involved in discussions on the grant applications and he had also previously been involved in discussions with various groups associated with the proposals for the A426 Bus Corridor and was also on the Steering Group for the Basketball Arena Project.

Councillor Porter declared an Other Disclosable Interest in community budget items as he had been involved in discussions on the grant applications and he had also

previously campaigned against the proposed Bus Lanes for the A426 Bus Corridor and had also expressed opposition to development on Franklyn Fields and Aylestone Meadows.

In accordance with the Council's new Code of Conduct these interest were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice Members' judgement of the public interest. The Members were not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting during discussion on these items.

163. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillors were asked to agree the minutes of the Aylestone Community Meeting, held on Thursday 11 October 2012.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Aylestone Community Meeting, held on Thursday 11 October be agreed as a correct record.

164. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL AND LEISURE CENTRE FACILITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Paul Edwards, Head of Sport, Leicester City Council, gave a brief report on the budget proposals for older people. He commented that the following were being considered:-

- Free swimming for over 60 year olds could be widened to other leisure events at other times.
- A £1 per day charge for City Residents over 60 years old had been proposed and was currently subject to consultation. At present 60 responses had been received. A £5 monthly charge had been suggested during the consultation process and was being assessed.
- Free exercise activities for those referred for exercise by their GP was also being considered.

Members of the public considered the £5 per month charge to be reasonable and asked whether other options had been considered such as increasing charges for football pitches. In response, Mr Edwards stated that all other avenues had been exhausted over the years and that pricing issues were very sensitive, it was considered that there were no other viable options at the present.

The City Mayor commented on the proposals to stop free concessionary fares for over 60 year olds before 9.30am and stated that a survey was currently being undertaken to assess usage. It was known that some used this concession to go to work, which was not in the ethos of the scheme. There was no intention, however, to prevent genuine users going to medical appointments. The survey would assist in shaping a way forward.

165. COMMUNITY SPORTS ARENA PROJECT

Kevin Routledge, Leicester Riders, gave a short presentation on a joint proposal between Leicester Riders, Leicestershire County Cricket Club and Leicester College. Representatives of the Cricket Club and the College were also in attendance.

Mr Routledge invited the public to attend an open day at Grace Road on Saturday 23 February 2013 from 10 am and 2 pm to see the full extent of the proposal and to talk to those involved. The skeleton of the proposal was:-

- To develop a 60m by 40m indoor arena with a seating capacity of 2,000.
- It would be the largest indoor sports facility in the City.
- It would be used by school children during the day and by adults during the evening.
- Leicester Riders would have 6% usage of the facility.
- A bid had been submitted to Sport England and a response was awaited.
- The impact on traffic issues would be modest compared to Cricket Matches which could attract crowds of up to 7,000.
- 15% of usage would be given to development for basketball primarily but also cricket as well.
- The facility would be run on a not for profit basis and any profits would be invested in local sport.
- There were currently 29,000 students locally who only had access to a 3 court badminton facility.
- By building the proposed facility onto the existing Mike Turner Suite at the Curzon Road end it would be possible to build the arena for £2m as opposed to a usual cost of £5m for an arena of this size.
- Discussions were ongoing on the planning issues and with Sky Sports in relation to the continued TV coverage of games during the construction phase, which could be as early as April if all went well.

The public expressed general support for the proposal as it provided a valuable community asset.

Mr Routledge and those representing the three joint partners were thanked for their attendance and the presentation.

166. HOMELESS REVIEW AND PROPOSALS

Gurjit Minhas and Martin Clewlow, Leicester City Housing, attended the meeting to give a presentation on the Homeless Review and Proposals. During the presentation the following points were made:-

- A review of services had been carried out between March and September 2012 in partnership with voluntary, community and faith groups.
- Following the review a draft new Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Proposals had been developed.
- The consultation on the proposals started in November and would end on the 18 February 2013.

- The review had identified that services needed to be transformed from a culture of crisis and rescue to one of prevention.
- The City had one of the highest levels of hostel provision and 37% of single hostel clients had experienced more than 2 admissions.
- The City had one of the highest rough sleeper counts outside of London.
- The aim was to promote independent living and only those with the highest need should be placed in accommodation. This would be achieved through developing preventative measures and the supply of private accommodation and the use of STAR (Supporting Tenants and Residents) to provide housing related support services to enable independent living.
- Single people who did not meet the criteria could be the worst affected, but the new criteria would be subject to a pilot scheme including new ways of finding accommodation for families in the private sector.
- The review proposed to close Lower Hastings Street and Loughborough Road Hostels.
- The Dawn Centre in Conduit Street would continue to exist as an assessment centre.
- Some clients stayed in hostels for up to 2 years and that was considered to be too long. The new framework would attempt to place them into independent tenancy arrangements.

In response to questions, Mr Clewlow stated that the Lower Hastings Street premises would not be left empty and it was difficult to determine, at this stage, what the impact of the new changes to the welfare benefits system could have on homelessness.

Ms Minhas and Mr Clewlow were thanked for their presentation.

167. FRANKLYN FIELDS AND AYLESTONE MEADOWS

FRANKLYN FIELDS

The City Mayor gave an update in relation to the possible development of Franklyn Fields. He stated that the site was considered to be too sensitive to be developed without adequate controls. Whilst there was always a need to obtain best value from land assets, any potential development would need to be sensitive and not jeopardise the nature of Aylestone Meadows. It was not possible to state that the area would never be developed, but any development should:-

- Prevent the possibility of the previous road scheme being resurrected;
- Enhance the ecological and environmental aspects of the area, especially near to the Canal and Aylestone Meadows;
- Have an intensity that was in keeping with the area; and
- Any entrance into the site should not result in an overwhelming burden on the existing road system.

Members of the public made the following comments and observations:-

- The effect of any development on flooding issues;
- Developers should renovate empty/derelict properties;
- Local residents should be consulted upon any proposals to develop the site at the earliest opportunity;
- The impact upon horses grazing on the land.

In response it was stated:-

- Any development should be at the top of the hill and not at the bottom;
- That the City and County Councils were both land owners and planning authorities for the site and would wish to get the best ecological value from the land;
- Discussions would take place with the ward councillors and the public on potential development proposals;
- The informal grazing by horses was not part of the farm.

AYLESTONE MEADOWS

The City Mayor reported that the suggested site at Braunstone Lane East had not been included in his recent decision on identifying small transit sites for Gypsy and Travellers.

In response to a question about delays in the Spring Close area at the junction with the ring road, the City Mayor stated that he would ask officers to revisit the site and undertake a traffic survey. However there was currently a long waiting list for the installation of traffic lights.

Mr Richardson, Leicester City Planning Services, commented there was current planning guidance on run off rates for green field sites which focused on water discharge from any new development being recycled and kept on site so that it did not add to flooding.

It was also noted that the dredging of streams were carried out at such times to ensure that it was sympathetic to the local ecology.

168. AYLESTONE VILLAGE - ON-STREET PARKING RESTRICTIONS

Bona Maturi reported upon the proposals to reduce the waiting time from 1 hour to 30 minutes by the shops on Lutterworth Road. The proposal had arisen from a petition received last year to address parking issues arising from people parking in the lay-bys and going into the City. It was proposed to introduce a 30 minute limit on waiting in the lay-bys on both sides of the shops on Aylestone Lane with no return within 1 hour. Consultation had taken place with the Police and consultation would take place if a Traffic Regulation Order was proposed.

The public suggested that 45 minutes waiting would be preferable but Mr Maturi commented that 45 minutes is difficult to enforce. The public also suggested that there was a need for short term parking in the area. It was stated, in response, that there were no suitable public sites available for this purpose. The abuse of parking in Earl Russell Street and Church Road near Aylestone Road was also reported.

169. UPDATE ON THE A426 BUS LANE

The City Mayor gave an update on the A462 Bus Corridor Scheme. He stated that:-

- The scheme was jointly funded by the City and County Councils and local bus companies.
- He was firmly of the view that the City Council's contribution to the scheme represented excellent value for money to bus users, cyclists, motorists and pedestrians.
- The Council's contribution to the scheme was funded from the capital budget. It was capital investment and did not affect the Council's revenue budget that was under pressure which was used to fund expenditure on such items as staff and services.
- The scheme was one of many investments the Council made and, in comparison, the costs were approximately a tenth of the investment in new primary school places across the City. Investment in road improvements was one of the City's priorities.
- As City Mayor he had to make a judgement on the overall benefit to the City of any scheme.

The public had divided views on the scheme and made the following comments and observations:-

- 38% of people did not have access to a car and such schemes were needed.
- Concerns were expressed about an increase in the number of buses using the route.
- The scheme did not make much improvement to Oxford Street and The Newarke part of the bus route, particularly that part of the route involving Harman Road, Walnut Street, Infirmary Square and The Magazine, which could still be a bottle-neck.
- There was disappointment that the public responses to the public consultation submitted to the City Council were largely against the proposals and these views seemed to have been ignored. A number of local residents were against the scheme.
- The designation of 24 hour/7 day per week bus lanes was questioned and why other options such as traffic lights were not used instead.
- Some felt that the sheer volume of cars was a problem for local residents and there was support for bus lanes to reduce this and to promote increased cycle use.
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In response to comments made by the public, the City Mayor stated that:-

- Public consultation was one part of many considerations to be taken into account before making a decision. Consultation was not a referendum and was not binding as such, but it did provide an important opportunity to form a view of public opinions and what issues were of concern to the public. Often schemes were amended to address issues and views that had been expressed in responses to the consultation process.
- The public consultation showed both support for, and opposition to, the scheme. There were other considerations to be taken into account such as the overall impact of the scheme, the benefits to improved infrastructure and public transport improvements, reduction in accidents etc and advice from officers. The overwhelming conclusion was that the scheme was to the benefit of all road users in the City.
- The scheme improved safety for cyclists, improved pedestrian crossings, improved capacity at junctions and additional bus services.
- The scheme included provision for the re-configuration of traffic lights to improve traffic flows for all road users.
- The scheme would support a modal shift in the use of public transport. The introduction of Bus Lanes was not a complete panacea, but other factors such as affordable fares and buses running at times when people wanted them were all equally part of the solution.
- The outcomes of the consultation were published and should be available on line. The scheme was County Council led and information was also available on their website.

The City Mayor was thanked for his attendance and update.

170. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING - UPDATE

PC Kevin Butler, Local beat Officer, Leicestershire Police, gave an update on policing issues in the Ward. The following crime figures were reported.

- There had been 44 crimes reported on the beat since 6 December 2012;
- 2 indecent exposures – where the offender was known to the victim;
- 3 incidents of robbery - including the Post Office on Knighton Lane and the Newsagent on Saffron Lane;
- 1 theft from a business;
- 4 cycle thefts – 2 where the cycles were secured and 2 unsecured;
- 7 thefts from motor vehicles – 5 involving insecure doors and 2 forced entries;
- 7 damaged vehicles.

In response to a question from the public concerning mobile scrap metal collectors, PC Butler stated that it was not an offence for people to walk onto a property unless the owner stated that they should not enter. The Police had stocks of cold calling cards for this purpose. He also stated that if there was an incident of theft from a property by mobile scrap metal collectors, these should be reported to the Police for investigation.

171. CITY WARDEN - UPDATE

Roy Smith, City Warden, gave an update on the issues dealt within the Ward since the last meeting. He reported upon the following:-

- There had been a number of graffiti clean up operations involving the local community and business on Saffron Lane. The Police had apprehended two suspects involved in the tagging incidents of SO12 and KASE. Incidents of these tagging seemed to be reducing.
- The Bins in Streets initiative had taken place involving Leeson Street, Handy Street and Curzon Street. No fixed penalty notices had been issued, and a letter drop initiative appeared to have successful in reducing the problem.
- The Wardens and Riverside Rangers had increased patrols for dog fouling and had started early morning patrols from 6.30am, and patrols would continue until 7.00pm.
- 2 fixed penalty notices had been issued for littering on Saffron Lane and Aylestone Drive.
- Observations had taken place on Middleton Street/Church Street to reduce incidents of the illegal right turns.

The Public reported upon incidents of littering of cigarette ends at two local pubs and the City Warden reported that he would investigate these.

The public thanked the City Warden for responding promptly to two recent telephone calls to report incidents.

172. BUDGET

It was noted that the approved expenditure on Grants so far this year for the Ward was £8,599.50 (including the 3 fast-tracked bids below) which left a balance of £9,400.50 for the remainder of the year and the two bids submitted for approval at this meeting.

The following applications had been received and approved by Councillors prior to the meeting under the fast-track procedure for grant applications with a value of £500 or less.

Gilmorton Development Group - £500 approved to fund food supplies to low paid, elderly and disabled people, subject to satisfactory accounts being submitted and the scheme being run on a targeted and referral basis.

Friends of Aylestone Hall Gardens - £450 approved to fund an archery day in the summer that will be promoted in association with local schools, youth organisations and the local authority. The event would also encourage greater use of the Gardens as a community amenity.

Friends of Aylestone Hall Gardens - £406 approved to fund an A5 Interpretation Board for the Aylestone Garden Sun Dial subject to details of the donator of the sundial and the date the sundial was installed being added to the board.

The following applications had been received and were considered by the meeting.

1) Gilmorton Development Group

An application has been received from the Gilmorton Development Group for a grant of £200 to jet wash/clean the communal area around Gilmorton Community Room/Shops. The application had not been fast-tracked as further information was being sought to ascertain whether the City Council would undertake this work.

RESOLVED:

that consideration be deferred until the further information requested by Councillor Porter in relation to whether this work will be carried out by the City Council is received.

2) Free running

An application had been received from the Youth Service for a grant of £480 to support sessions of Freerunning and Parkour at the Samworth Academy. The majority of young people attending these sessions were between 13 and 16 years old and were from Eyres Monsell, Saffron and Aylestone Wards. The sessions would be planned and evaluated towards gaining the Youth Achievement Award. 30% of participants were from the Ward.

RESOLVED:

that a grant of £480 be approved.

173. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next Community Ward meeting would be held on Thursday 14 March 2013 at a venue to be decided. The public were invited to submit any items for consideration at future meetings to either of the Ward Councillors.

174. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD – RUSSEL STREET

In order to promote the existence of the Notice Board, anyone wishing to display notices was invited to do so.

ANNUAL LIST OF MEETINGS

A member of the public suggested that it would be helpful to advertise a whole year's list of meeting with venues in future. Councillors stated that they could do this for the next year.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS FORMAT

Councillors asked members of the public to give feedback on the forms provided on the format of community meetings and make any suggestions on how these could be improved.

175. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.05 pm