



Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman Area Committee

RECORD OF MEETING

**Held on Wednesday, 18 January 2006 at Aylestone Leisure Centre,
Knighton Lane East**

Present

Councillor Mark Farmer (Chair)

Councillor Nigel Porter, Aylestone;
Councillor Dean Ramsdale, Eyres Monsell;

Inspector Paul Mansfield, Police
David Budd, Police

35 Members of the Public

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81. Declaration of interests

There were no declarations by Councillors.

82. Record of the last meeting

It was pointed out that question there was a mistake recorded in question 58. The question referred to the use of facilities by youth groups up until 5pm. This should have read, use of facilities until 10pm.

RESOLVED:

that, subject to the above amendment, the record of the meeting held on Thursday 27 October 2005 was agreed as a correct record.

83. Responses to questions from the last meeting

There were no points raised about the responses to questions.

84. Proposal for Playground

Anna Parr from the Kingfisher Youth Centre introduced a proposal for the development of a playground on the area to the rear of Neston Gardens, known locally as the 'mud dumps'. Young people had been consulted on what they would like to see on the site. They had a number of ideas of what they would like to see. The results of the consultation would be discussed with the Neston Gardens Action Group.

Local young people gave their views about what they would like to see on the site. They wanted a basketball court, somewhere to play sports and a quad bike track. They felt that if this area was provided it would give them somewhere to play sports without annoying residents. They also felt that there would be less vandalism as they would have somewhere to play.

John Thompson, Neighbourhood Housing Manager said that the idea of the play equipment would be to prevent anti social behaviour. He felt it would be a good site for such equipment. He had been advised by Voluntary Action Leicester that funding could be available to provide the equipment. He said that it would hoped the Committee could provide a view as to whether they thought the play area would be a good idea or a nuisance.

Councillors thanked the young people for coming along to the meeting, commenting that it was good to have their positive input. They said that it was important that they looked at the site. They also said that it was important that Council Officers and residents were supportive of the proposals.

It was requested that consideration be given to avoiding the historic public right of way which goes through the site.

AGREED:

that a site visit be organised with local Councillors invited and relevant Council officers.

85. Grounds / Area Maintenance

The Chair introduced this item of business. He commented that throughout the summer he had received complaints from residents about grounds maintenance, particularly that relating to grass cutting and tree pruning.

A resident confirmed that he felt the standard of maintenance was poor. He felt that out of the way places were ignored for maintenance. He expressed concern that the Housing Department was paying for a service which wasn't being properly undertaken.

Steve Palethorpe, Area Parks Manager said that there were difficulties with undertaking grounds maintenance last year. He said that the weather made it difficult to keep a regular maintenance programme up to date. It was also a long growing

season. He noted that there was only a set amount of money to pay for maintenance and the existing agreement with the housing department meant that the grass would be cut 16 times a year. He said that the housing department were considering a report which considered different options such as additional grass cuttings or better machinery.

The Chair queried the frequency which the grass was cut, he'd had reports that in some cases it was up to three months between each cut. Steve Palethorpe didn't think that was the case. He said he couldn't comment on specific examples.

Councillor Ramsdale said that he wished to see in future the grass cut more often as leaving it a long time meant damage to machinery and a poor cut. He also wished to see edges trimmed on pathways and the grass removed between pathways as these could prove dangerous in older people's communal areas. He also wished to see the grass cuttings removed.

A resident commented that there was a problem with Council vans parking on grass verges on Pasley Road which was damaging the verges. The Chair commented that there was no excuse for Council vans parking on the verges and he would seek to get this stopped.

Councillor Porter expressed concerns about the state of the verges on Lutterworth Road. He noted that cars now parked on the verges since double yellow lines were introduced. He wished to see the verges repaired and bollards installed to prevent further cars parking.

A resident also expressed concerns about the condition of the pavements in Eyres Monsell. Councillor Ramsdale explained that the poor condition of paths was due to historic underinvestment. There was a backlog of work which needed undertaking across the city. Councillor Porter also expressed concerns about the highways budget which large amounts of which would be used to fund the Glenhill's Way / Pork Pie scheme. He felt this would leave little money to undertake other improvements such as path improvements and traffic calming.

A resident also commented that it made sense for the Council to keep the pavements in good condition as they would save money in compensation.

AGREED:

- (1) that the Arts, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the state of verges on the Lutterworth Road with a view to them being repaired and bollards being installed;
- (2) that a report be brought back to the Area Committee on ways in which the grounds maintenance can be improved to include weed removal, edging in communal areas, more frequent cuts and grass being picked up;
- (3) that Council Officers be requested to not park their vans on verges on Pasley Road.

86. Update On Developments To Local Sports Facilities

Clive Morrison from Leicester City Council's sports services updated the Committee on progress with developments in local sports centres. He noted that the gym equipment and free-weights from Saffron Lane Sports Centre had now been moved to Aylestone Leisure Centre. The Saffron Lane track was currently closed and being upgraded and would be re-opened in the summer.

A resident expressed concern over security at the site and what was happening on the site. The Chair asked that this matter be put forward as a question.

Councillor Porter commented that a planning application for the housing on the site would be submitted in due course and the public would be able to comment on that application.

A resident expressed a general concern about the loss of sports facilities in the city over recent years. Councillors on the Committee explained that they felt this was due to under investment over a long period of time. Investment was now being made into sports facilities.

A resident expressed concerns about the lack of funding for Southfields Sports Centre. It was queried when charging would be brought in at the centre, and who would be responsible for administering this as there didn't seem to be any staff at the centre. The Chair requested that this be put forward as a public question.

87. Overview of the Joint Action Group

Inspector Paul Mansfield gave the meeting an introduction to the work of Police Joint Action Groups. These were the bodies that were replacing the previous crime and disorder meetings. They were held every six weeks. He wished to extend an invite to anyone who was interested. He was particularly keen to get younger people involved in the meetings.

The meetings considered four different types of offences, these were:-

- 1) anti social behaviour and low level crime
- 2) Acquisitive crime, such as burglary
- 3) Prolific Offenders
- 4) Violent Crime – Domestic and Non Domestic

The meetings took place every six weeks. Any matters that the public raise at the meeting will be recorded. Where action is required a 'Tactical Assessment' will take place. This will be a course of action to address the problem and a named person will be responsible for taking it forward. The action can be challenged at future meetings.

The Chair welcomed the success that had been achieved on reducing burglary but commented that it was still high. He felt that further consideration needed to be given

as to how support can be give to burglary further. He also requested that the JAG provide a report on levels of domestic violence. Inspector Mansfield said that he was pleased with the reduction in burglary which was down 24% on the previous year, but would continue to look to reduce this even further. He noted that there was a meeting of the Domestic Violence Forum in the week following the meeting. He would bring details of the work of the Forum to a future meeting.

Inspector Mansfield also invited all members of the public to a Police Authority, Police & Public Consultation Meeting that was taking place on the following night at Southfields Drive Community Centre.

88. Area Committee Budget Proposals

The Committee had a budget of £25,000 for general matters and £10,000 for sports. Details of the amounts that had already been spent out of the budget were included with the agenda papers.

The meeting heard representations from residents and representatives regarding proposals for expenditure of the Area Committee budget.

Bid from Aylestone Farm Horse Owners

Miranda White submitted a request for £1500 to fund consultants to consider whether proposals to provide better facilities for horse riders would be feasible. Officers provided an email which stated that they could provide the service free of charge to find out whether the proposals were feasible. It was recommended that any funding from the Area Committee would be better spent on carrying out works rather than funding consultants. It was agreed to hold a meeting between interested parties and officers from the Council to find a way forward on this matter.

Employment of Extra Advice Worker to Clear Backlog

Saffron Resources Centre submitted a request for £2400 to employ an experienced sessional advice worker.

The Chair stated that he would defer this item to the next meeting as neither of the ward Councillors were in attendance. It was part of the agreed procedure that Councillors from the ward affected must give their support to any budget proposal.

Peter Thomson commented that this was disappointing. He asked that a quick decision on this issue be provided.

Magpie Youth Centre – AXLR8 Motorbike Project

Gwynneth Carter and two young people introduced the request for £4000 for the AXLR8 motorbike project which aimed to give young people active involvement and participation in a programme around safer motorbike experiences and awareness.

Members of the Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that funding be as follows:- £3000 from the general budget, £500 from the sport budget and £500 from crime reduction funding.

Eyres Monsell Club for Young People

Louise Kaufman introduced a request from the Eyres Monsell Club for Young People for a grant of between £1000-2000 to enable the club to undertake repairs to the fabric of the building because it has problems with leaking radiators, damp carpets and a faulty heating system.

Members of the Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet to support the Club up to a maximum of £2000 to help with capital repairs to the building.

Saffron Out of School and Saffron Community Enterprises – supported by St. Christopher’s Church

A request for a total of £1900 was made by the above organisations. This was for the purposes of bringing back in to use, the vicarage located on the corner of Marriot Road and Whitwell Row. Some of the money would be used to upgrade the premises telephone, security and electrical systems. The rest of the money would be used as rent for the premises for two months, gas and electricity and telephone charges.

Karen Pickering explained that following the proposed closure of Unit 9 of Linwood Workshops Saffron Community Enterprises and Saffron Out of School would lose their premises. It was therefore proposed to lease the vicarage to house these activities.

The Chair queried if Unit 9 Linwood Workshops were to remain open, would the grant still be required. Karen confirmed that the grant wouldn’t be needed if they still had use of Unit 9, but they had been given clear indications that Unit 9 would definitely be closed down.

The Chair then moved a recommendation:-

that the Committee recommends to Cabinet that the means be found to ensure that Unit 9 Linwood Workshops remains open to community groups.

Peter Thomson requested that a decision be made quickly and that should it not remain open for use, that the request for £1900 be considered for funding as soon as possible.

Saffron Resource Centre Education Advice

Peter Thomson from Saffron Resource Centre introduced a request for £4000 funding to pay for an education advice worker and related costs for 40 days in February and March.

The Chair commented again that this was a Freemen ward issue and as no Councillors were present the Committee were unable to provide support at the current time.

Gates on Meadow Gardens

Councillor Ramsdale noted that Councillor Keeling had previously expressed a desire to provide gates / fencing outside the car parks on Meadow Gardens at a cost of £1000.

Residents spoke in support of this proposal, noting that it had been requested for the past two years.

The Area Housing Manager spoke in support of this proposal as did Councillor Porter who noted strong support for the gates at a residents meeting.

As Councillor Keeling had previously indicated he was in favour of providing the gates, the Committee agreed to support this proposal.

Other Matters

Councillor Farmer indicated that for future budgets he wished to see funding for Eyres Monsell Carnival and for elderly peoples projects.

89. City Council Budget Proposals

The Chair outlined for the meeting, the key points of the City Council's budget proposals for the forthcoming year. The main points of this were that the Council was planning to make significant efficiency savings, it was operating in an environment of budgetary restraint and a low Council tax rise was planned. It was also noted that further funding was planned for Area Committees.

Residents raised concerns about the proposals to cut woodwork classes at the Linwood Centre. Many felt that these classes, although they didn't lead to qualifications, would give people confidence to go on and achieve on courses which did lead to qualifications. It was noted that there were difficulties with health and safety, particularly with dust extraction and it would cost £9000 to remedy the situation. Concern was also expressed that the kiln had been closed down, also for health and safety reasons. It was agreed to put this forward as a public question. Members of the Committee indicated that they would support getting these classes reinstated.

Residents raised concerns about proposals for charging for early years groups. It was felt that the increase to £3.50 was too sudden and would be counter productive as it would put people off attending these groups. It was felt that a lower rise would have been preferable, as it would still allow more people to attend. The Chair in response pointed out that the Learning and Skills Council would pay the fees of those that couldn't afford them. He also stated that a common price across the city would make it fairer as prices currently varied considerably.

Residents pointed out a recent course called 'Cooking on Budget' which cost £75 for 10 weeks and pupils still needed to purchase their ingredients. They felt that this was too expensive.

90. Leicester's Local Area Agreement

The Chair noted that the briefing note was included with the agenda papers mainly for information, although if there was interest in the subject, it could be discussed in greater detail at a future meeting.

Residents raised concerns about the imposition of a Neighbourhood Manager on the Saffron Lane Estate without consultation as part of the Local Area Agreement. The Chair commented that the Government had set down guidelines for the employment of such managers which gave no time for consultation. The conditions of employment were also heavily prescribed by the Government, for example the salary that could be paid to the manager. The Manager would however be based in the community and local Councillors would be working closely with the manager to develop local priorities.

It was agreed to have a further report on this matter at the next meeting.

91. Saffron & Eyres Monsell Employment Project Update

This item was noted for information only.

92. Public questions

The following questions were asked by members of the public. The column on the right shows which Council officer the question has been sent to for a response to be written if it could not be answered sufficiently at the meeting. Any responses given at the meeting will be in a separate report which also contains the responses from officers after the meeting.

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| 68) | Residents expressed a number of concerns about security at the Saffron Lane Sports Centre site particularly in view of recent fires, vandalism and break-ins. It was queried whether the site had been taken over by a developer? Who was responsible for the security at the site? What could be done to prevent further vandalism etc? Will there be security guards and CCTV? | Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture and Resources, Access and Diversity |
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Residents also asked what the effect would be on neighbouring properties of the new development? Would the Council allow large blocks of flats? Will there

	be new roads associated with the development?	
69)	It was queried what was happening with regard to charging for the use of Southfields Sports Centre. A group, the 'Friendship Group' met at the centre and despite repeated requests had not been informed when it was planned to introduce charging and how much it would be and who would be responsible for collecting the payment. Can this information please be provided.	Corporate Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
70)	It was queried why the woodworking classes had been cancelled at the Linwood centre. It was noted that there were problems with dust extraction, but it was hoped that this could be overcome. Concern was also expressed that the kiln had also been shut down for health and safety reasons. Residents felt that these courses provided the means for people to build self-esteem and eventually move on to accredited courses.	Corporate Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
71)	We would like to see traffic calming on Bloomfield Road. Traffic uses the road as a rat run and cars drive down the road too fast. We would like to see our local Councillors support us to get this installed before someone gets injured. We would also like to see traffic lights on the Fairway to prevent rat running from drivers from the Wigston direction.	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture
72)	Why has it been proposed to raise the charges for early years facilities to £3.50? An increase of this level will be counter productive as it would put people off attending completely in large numbers and would consequently bring in less money. A lower more graded increase would mean that more income would be achieved, as fewer people would be put off by the increase in the cost.	Corporate Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
73)	There was recently a public notice in the Leicester Mercury about the closure of Middleton Street / Braunstone Lane railway bridge. It indicated that access would be provided for vehicular traffic. What provisions / alternative arrangements are being put in place for pedestrians / cyclists and equestrians who wish to use the road?	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture
74)	We would like to see a youth centre for the young people of Aylestone. There isn't any funding for youth	Corporate Director

services in the area, it is the forgotten area.

Education
and Lifelong
Learning

- 75) The parks in Aylestone haven't had any new equipment for at least 10 years, especially Aylestone Meadows on Braunstone Lane East which looks like a local dumping ground. There isn't any benches for you to sit on. New play equipment and a skateboard park is requested. A fenced off play area and equipment for under 5's is requested.

Corporate
Director of
Regeneration
and Culture

New Play equipment, a skateboard park and a fenced off area for under 5's is also requested for the park at the back of Aylestone Leisure Centre.

93. Petitions

There were no petitions.

94. Information sharing

There was a Police Authority, Police and & Public Consultation meeting being held at Southfields Drive Community Centre on 19 January.

Karen Pickering informed the meeting that there were substance and alcohol misuse events taking place on February 9 and 16 at 10am – 2.30pm. These would cover basic awareness and intervention and referral.

95. Dates of / Items of Business at Future Meetings

It was proposed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday 22 March at **2pm**. There was disagreement about whether it was a good idea to hold the meeting at 2pm. A vote of all those present showed a clear majority in favour holding the meetings at 6.00pm.

It was therefore agreed to hold future meetings as follows:-

Wednesday 22 March 2006, 6.00pm – St Hugh's Church Hall (This venue was arranged subsequent to the meeting)

Thursday 25 May 2006, 6.00pm – Aylestone Baptist Church

96. Any other urgent business

PORK PIE AND ATTLEE WAY/GLENHILLS WAY IMPROVEMENT

Councillor Farmer noted that the Council's Cabinet had deferred a decision on this transport scheme. He said that he remained concerned about road widening proposals. He said that he would continue to object to the scheme.

Councillor Porter made a number of points in relation to this item.

- He expressed concerns about the cost increase of the scheme proposed in 2002 of £1 million to the current scheme which would cost £3 million.
- Following investigations, he claimed that improvements to air quality had been overstated and in some cases would get worse.
- He said that no 'cost / benefits analysis' had been undertaken, but a letter he had received stated that this had been done.
- He felt that the claims put forward about the accident record of the pork pie island were misleading. He felt that information he had obtained from the Police and the insurance industry showed that there were worse accident hotspots in the city.
- He felt that under current government noise guidance, (PPG24), the houses on Glenhills Boulevard wouldn't receive planning permission today. He therefore felt that the road widening would create unacceptable noise levels.
- Overall he felt that a scheme should be proposed that residents wanted and which decreased the amount of traffic in the area, not increased it.

A resident commented that accident statistics should always be considered carefully, the criteria for recording by the Police and the Insurance industry varied widely.

A resident expressed a concern that when the City Academy was opened in 2007, the traffic situation would be complicated further.

The Councillors on the Committee then agreed the following resolution:-

AGREED:

that it be recommended to Cabinet that the Area Committee is opposed to the scheme as it stands and a new scheme is requested with full community consultation.

97. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

