

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 15 June 2009

Held at: St Matthews Community Centre, Malabar Road

Who was there:

Councillor Hanif Aqbany
Councillor Dr Shofiqui Chowdhury
Councillor Mohammed Dawood

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.

TABLE 1

- Ward Councillors and General Information

Talk to your local Councillors or raise general queries.

TABLE 2

- Council Housing Issues

Talk to Council officers about council housing issues

TABLE 3

- City Wardens

Talk to your local City Warden

TABLE 4

- Health

Talk to local Health Representatives

TABLE 5

- Police

Talk to your local Police Officers.

TABLE 6

- Highways and Transportation

Talk to those responsible for Highways and Transportation issues.

TABLE 7

- Spinney Hills Park

Find out about the Heritage Lottery Fund Bid for Spinney Hills Park.

TABLE 8

- Citizens Eye Magazine

Find out more about this local community media organisation

TABLE 9

- New Futures

Talk to representatives from this local organisation.

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.

37. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Dawood was elected as Chair for the meeting.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr Chowdhury.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

40. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2 March were agreed as a correct record.

41. LOCAL TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Representatives from Leicester City Council's Regeneration, Highways and Transportation Department gave a presentation on traffic related issues in the local area.

Jeff Miller, Director, Regeneration, Transport and Highways explained that the most prominent traffic and highways issues in the Spinney Hills ward were around a lack of parking, obstructive parking and speeding traffic. Jeff informed the meeting that work has now been completed to combat speeding problems on Mere Road.

Jeff raised the following points as part of his presentation:

- There are 490 miles of road, 808 miles of footways and 19 miles of rights of way in Leicester.
- There are 43,000 street lights and illuminated signs in Leicester.
- There are 321 traffic lights
- There are 21,000 "highway" trees
- There are 138 hectares of highway verges
- There are 8 car parks and 1 bus station

Andy Thomas, Head of City Development also explained that there was lots of competition for parking space on the Victorian streets within Spinney Hills. Furthermore, it was reported that the police have assisted in dealing with problems with lorries and cars that parked on pavements. Verge hardening was described as one way of addressing the problem of a lack of parking. Ways to curb selfish parking were stated as being imposing double yellow lines, an increased presence of Civil Enforcement Officers, and installing bollards.

With regard to issues with speeding motorists and general road safety, Jeff explained that the methods taken to curb these problems were undertaking traffic speed surveys, installing vehicle activated signs and safety cameras and reducing speed limits. Jeff explained that a pilot project to install vehicle activated signs was to take place in part of the city, before being rolled out to the whole of the city. He did state however, that Leicester had the second safest roads in the country.

Jeff informed the meeting that the Council was very keen to promote the use of public transport, and worked with the bus companies on the Quality Bus Partnership. In response to a question from a Member of the Public, Jeff reported that the Council had no influence in determining the price of bus fares, but administered the Government's concessionary fares scheme.

In respect of the work on Mere Road that took place to curb the problems with speeding traffic, Jeff stated that the Cabinet Lead Member for Regeneration and Transport had been consulted around the effectiveness of the changes. It was reported that the level of feedback from the works was positive and that similar work would be rolled out across the rest of the Spinney Hills ward.

A Member of the Public was of the view that there was inconsistency with the placement of double-yellow lines in the ward and felt that the length of lines on particular roads should be reduced whilst others did not have lines at all that perhaps should have. Andy explained that the entries to roads were usually kept clear to allow emergency vehicle access, but that the extent of a double yellow line often depended on the nature of a particular road.

Another Member of the Public reported that many vehicles had recently been parking illegally on East Park Road. The complainant felt frustrated that the situation had not been rectified. Barbara Whitcombe, City Wardens Manager explained that such incidents would normally be dealt with by the city warden. She explained that the city warden for Spinney Hills and Stoneygate had recently left, but that a replacement warden would soon be in post. In response to a further issue raised concerning the sale of vehicles on roadside, Barbara explained that this act was only illegal if the actual transaction took place on the street itself. She hoped that new legislation would be produced that would make such trading more difficult.

A resident from the St Matthews Estate stated that there were several dangerous pot-holes on the estate. Members agreed that a patch-walk should take place on the St Matthews Estate to specifically identify pot-holes.

A Member of the Public spoke of parking difficulties when accessing places of worship in the area. Officers expressed sympathy to these concerns but stated that it would not be possible to issue parking exemptions specifically for places of worship, but agreed to look into the restrictions that were currently in place, and would look at providing alternative options such as pay and display bays. Andy further stated that officers were currently conducting a piece of work to assess the parking situations of all places of worship across Leicester.

A Member of the Public stated that bollards were required outside St Matthews Petrol Station to deter motorists from parking on the verges. Jeff agreed to look at the possibility of re-installing bollards at this location if it was deemed necessary.

RESOLVED:

That a patch-walk be conducted on the St Matthews Estate to identify locations where there are pot-holes.

42. COMMUNITY SAFETY

Officers from Leicester City Council along with representatives of the local Police were in attendance to discuss community safety issues in the Spinney Hills Ward.

Sergeant Chohal, Spinney Hills LPU, reported that a covert operation had been in place to try to alleviate prostitution in Spinney Hills. He reported that the view of most residents was that the situation had improved during recent weeks, but was aware that there was still a significant problem in the area.

Several Members of the Public were of the view that there was still a significant amount of prostitution in the Maidstone Road area, and that the problem of prostitution tended to move location rather than become alleviated altogether. One resident reported that a problem had also developed in the St Matthews area. It was widely felt that despite efforts by the police to discourage prostitution on Maidstone Road, the message had not seemed to deter both clients and prostitutes.

One measure described by the police to tackle the issue was the installation of further lighting on Maidstone Road. It was reported that funding had been obtained to provide this. In addition, Kelvin Bates, Team Leader, Community Safety reported that lighting as well as CCTV was to be installed in the park close to Maidstone Road. It was acknowledged that a multi-agency approach was required to successfully tackle the problem.

Neil Canham, Leicester Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Manager made it clear that tenants were in breach of their tenancy if their premises were used for drug or vice purposes. He urged suspected cases of misuse to be reported to the Police and the Housing Office.

Several Members of the Public were of the view that problems with drugs in Highfields were also rife. Sergeant Chohal explained that the Police were aware of several drug related operations.

43. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Steve Letten, Member Support Officer introduced applications for funding from the Community Meeting budgets.

Steve reminded Members which applications had been funded from the previous years' budget. In terms of this years' budget, it was reported that the total amount

available was £17,000, with £10,000 of this allocated towards the ward action plan and sums of £5,000 and £2,000 allocated to the Ward Community Fund and Community Cohesion budgets respectively.

It was explained that four meetings were scheduled for the 2009/10 municipal year, and that the current budget had to last until May 2010.

Steve stated that eight applications had been received. The applications were dealt with as follows:

B1) Adan Hassan –St Matthews Community Solution Centre– request for £3,500

To pay for tutoring, studio hire, film/radio production, transport and DVD reduction to support 12 young people as well as 8 middle aged people who are unemployed to train in radio and media production training.

AGREED: that Members be minded to support the bid, subject to receiving further information from the applicant.

B3) Shree Patel Samaj–Multi-Cultural Bonanza– request for £750

To provide a musical and dance extravaganza. To pay for venue hire, tickets and leaflets printing and musicians.

AGREED: that £750 be recommended for approval from the Ward Community Fund.

B5) Leicester United Sports and Culture – Somali Super Cup – request for £500

To pay for field hire, trophies, voluntary expenses and football kit for a sporting event.

Although Members wished to defer consideration of applications for football activities, it was agreed that this application be recommended for approval as it was for a relatively low amount of money.

AGREED: that £500 be recommended for approval from the Ward Community Fund.

B7) Kaine Management Group – Multi-Cultural Awareness Project – request for £998.50

To provide two workshops and a sharing opportunity for up to 30 young pupils from two primary schools in the Spinney Hills Ward.

AGREED: that £998.50 be recommended for approval from the Community Cohesion Fund.

B8) Leicester Stars FC – Cross Country – request for £2,782.

To pay for athletics coaching, staffing expenses, transport costs, equipment and leafleting.

AGREED: that Members be minded to support the bid, subject to receiving further information from the applicant.

Members agreed to defer consideration of the following three applications (B2, B4 and B6) as they all related to the provision of football activities, and Members wished to meet with each of the applicants to discuss the best way of providing football activities in Spinney Hills

B2) Hassan Omar –Leicester United Sports and Culture – request for £5,800

To provide 12-weeks of continuous football training.

B4) Community Football Academy – Multi-Faith Football Match – request for £1250.

To pay for pitch hire and match equipment, medals, refreshments, marquee hire, first aid and insurance for the football match.

B6) Inner City Club Football – Football in the City Project – request for £7,200

To provide facilities, equipment, travel and education for football coaches.

In addition to the consideration of the above items, the meeting also received a presentation from Ansaar on the work that they have achieved with the money granted to them by the Community Meeting.

44. DATES OF MEETINGS - 2009/10

The following dates were confirmed for future meetings of the Spinney Hills Community Meeting:

Monday 28 September 2009

Monday 14 December 2009

Monday 1 March 2010

All meetings to commence at 6:00pm.

45. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8:40pm.