

# Westcotes Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**7:00 pm, Tuesday, 8 September 2009**

**Held at: Church of the Martyrs' Community Hall, Westcotes Drive**

Who was there:

Councillor Andy Connelly
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## **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 and to bring enquiries and raise issues.

### **Ward Councillors**

Members of the public were able to talk to their local Councillors

### **City Warden**

The City Wardens team was present to discuss residents' concerns

### **Customer Services**

Officers talked to residents about the service provided by Customer Services

### **UK Online**

Officers talked to residents about UK Online computer courses for beginners

### **Play Service**

Officers discussed local play and parks issues with residents

### **Highways and Transport**

Officers were available to discuss the Westcotes Residents' Parking Scheme

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.

### **13. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Councillor Connelly welcomed all present to the meeting and introduced himself.

### **14. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Connelly was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

### **15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell.

### **16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they had in the business to be discussed and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act applied to them.

Councillor Connelly declared a personal interest in the item "Update on Residents Parking", as he lived in the Ward and so would be affected by any parking scheme introduced.

### **17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2009 were approved as a correct record.

### **18. WEST END WATCH**

PC T J Mavani, the local licensing officer, based at Hinckley Road Police Station, explained that the aims of West End Watch included increased awareness of excessive drinking and the effects this could have, such as leading to anti-social behaviour, and increased awareness of under-age drinking. All 61 licensed premises in the area were participating in the scheme, which had been running for approximately three months.

The impact of the scheme already was being seen. For example, only three premises-related crimes had been reported in the last three months, compared to 16 reported in the three months before that. In addition, 62 test purchases had been made, of which only six had failed, and none had failed on re-test. Before the scheme started, approximately 60% of test purchases failed.

Plans for the future included the extension of the scheme to off-licensed premises, action to reduce underage street drinking in the area, aiming for a 100% success rate for test purchases and the introduction of improved communication methods between all participants. These were welcomed by the meeting.

Residents raised concerns about the number of people, some of whom were under-age, drinking and causing disturbances in the Bede Island area, as the police did not appear to be taking any action on this. PC Mavani explained that the Riverside team

covered this area and acknowledged that there was a lot of work to do to reduce this problem. To help achieve this, the police were working with the City Warden and were being assisted by De Montfort University, which had allowed the police access to the University's security camera in the area. In addition, Operation Stay Safe, a three-week pilot project, recently had been undertaken to move on the drinkers.

Residents were concerned that no further action would be taken in the Bede Island area, but were assured that the situation was being kept under review. In addition, the area was patrolled as often as possible by uniformed and plain clothes police officers and it was acknowledged that it was not possible to arrest large numbers of the drinkers in Bede Island, as this would remove police from patrolling the area. A review of Operation Stay Safe also was being undertaken, but one of the main concerns for the police was where the under-age drinkers were getting their alcohol.

On behalf of the meeting, the Chair thanked PC Mavani for attending.

## **19. UPDATE ON RESIDENTS PARKING**

Andy Thomas, the City Council's Head of City Development, reminded the meeting that consultation had been undertaken with residents that had shown there to be problems with parking in the area, particularly where people wanted to park outside of their homes and where there were narrow streets.

As a result of this, parking controls had been suggested for some of the roads in the Ward, in order to try to improve the situation for residents. Mr Thomas stressed that these were not final proposals and the maps displayed at the Information Fair prior to the meeting, on which the proposals were shown, were an indication of the type of controls that residents had suggested they would like the Council to introduce. As such, the maps and other documents were not legal documents.

All households in the area would be formally consulted on the principles shown on the maps displayed at the Information Fair prior to the meeting. Details of where further information could be found in community languages would be included in this.

Following the consultation, if the proposals for an area were found to be workable and residents voted that, on balance, they would like to have a parking scheme introduced, the Council would design a formal scheme on that basis. Residents' parking schemes would not be introduced where the formal consultation showed that the majority residents in a road, or part of a road, did not want such a scheme. This could mean that parts of some roads were in a scheme and other parts were not, as long as the distinction was clear and a legally enforceable boundary could be created between the parts.

It also was stressed that the Council was concerned not to damage businesses in the area by introducing parking controls that deterred people from using those businesses, but this had to be balanced with the needs of residents. Local businesses would be included in the formal consultation process and were welcome to make representations about proposals for any scheme.

There were a number of locations in the area that generated heavy traffic, such as schools, churches and the mosque. Discussions therefore would be held with these establishments, to try to determine what action could be taken to reduce traffic problems in their vicinity.

Once a formal scheme had been designed it would be consulted on and, if it was to proceed, then advertised in the Leicester Mercury. At this stage, anyone could object to the proposals, irrespective of where the objector lived. The Council was legally obliged to work with all objectors, to decide how to proceed in each particular case.

In response to a question, Mr Thomas explained that he was not aware of a situation ever arising where a residents' parking scheme had been removed because residents had changed their minds about having a scheme. Schemes could be reviewed to ensure that they were working as intended, but the number of reviews that could be undertaken would be limited by resources available.

During discussion on this matter, the following points were noted:

- copies of the maps displayed at the Information Fair prior to the meeting would be passed to Ward Members to enable them to discuss the principles behind residents' parking schemes more easily with interested parties;
- Mr Thomas stated that he would be happy to display the maps displayed at the Information Fair prior to the meeting at appropriate locations in the area, such as libraries or shop windows;
- leaflets advising residents that residents' parking schemes were being considered would be distributed to households in streets just outside the areas being considered for such schemes, as these residents could be affected by any scheme introduced;
- the Council did not have a set of standard criteria that were applied to determine whether a road should or should not have a residents' parking scheme. The particular circumstances of each case were considered, including the impact of the scheme on households and businesses in the area;
- where residents' parking schemes were introduced, each householder would be allocated one parking permit. This was a consistent policy across the City;
- "H" markings could be painted on roads outside properties with drop kerbs. This often could be done free of charge to residents. In June 2009 these markings had become legally enforceable; and
- income received from parking fines was used to fund the Council's parking system, concessionary fares and unprofitable bus routes.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Maps to be displayed at appropriate locations in the area, such as libraries or shop windows	Andy Thomas	In accordance with consultation period dates
Leaflets advising residents that residents' parking schemes were being considered to be distributed to households in streets just outside the areas being considered for such schemes	Andy Thomas	In accordance with consultation period dates

## 20. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Satish Shah, the City Council's Head of Transport Systems, gave an update on highways and transport issues that had been raised at the last meeting. This included the following points:

- highways inspectors visited roads every three months. When problems occurred, they could be dealt with through the reactive maintenance budget, (rather than that for planned maintenance);
- over 700 enforcement visits were made between February and the end of July 2009 regarding cars parked on pavements. In total, over 1,700 enforcement visits had been made to the Narborough Road area in the past year;
- the Council worked with residents to encourage them to cut back overhanging trees wherever possible; and
- a newsletter was available that contained details of how to contact Council officers on highways and transport matters.

## 21. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Councillor Connelly reported that the bikes for which funding had been agreed at the last meeting had been bought, (minute 9, "Community Meeting Budget: B1 – Police cycle Funding and Kit", 6 May 2009, referred). The "Summertime – Grow it! Cook it! Eat it!" project, the "Oh I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside!" event and the Riverside Festival, funding for which had been approved at the last meeting, all had been held successfully over the summer, (minute 9, "Community Meeting Budget", 6 May 2009, referred).

Councillor Connelly further reported that the Summer Soccer Academy, for which funding also had been agreed at the last meeting had been held at the Shaftesbury Playing Fields, (minute 9, "Community Meeting Budget: B2 – Summer Soccer Academy", 6 May 2009, referred). This had been very successful, being attended by 35 young people. Councillor Connelly advised the meeting that he had asked for a report on the Academy to be made at the next meeting.

Peter Cozens, City Council Members' Support Officer, advised the meeting that:

- no budget applications had been received since the last meeting;
- the City Council's Cabinet had agreed that the unspent Community Meeting budget from the 2008/09 financial year could be carried forward in to the current financial year. However, no unspent money would be carried forward from this year to next year's budget; and
- approximately £13,000 remained in the Ward Action Plan budget, approximately £4,300 remained in the Ward Community Fund budget and approximately £3,000 remained in the Ward Community Cohesion Fund.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Report on the Summer Soccer Academy to be made at the next meeting	Peter Cozens	Next meeting

## **22. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

7.00 pm on Wednesday, 2 December 2009 at the Church of the Martyrs' Community Hall, Westcotes Drive

## **23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### Graffiti

Concern was expressed about graffiti on street corners and in Iceland car park. Councillor Connelly reported that Network Rail had been contacted after the issue of graffiti on Network Rail bridges had been raised at the last meeting and asked to repaint the bridges affected, (minute 11, "Any Other Business", 6 May 2009, referred).

Network Rail had advised that it was unable to agree to this request, as repainting the bridges was not considered to be a high priority. Councillor Connelly undertook to investigate this further, including whether the introduction of preventative measures, (such as wire or spikes on top of the bridges to deter those doing the graffiti), could be considered.

## **24. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.51 pm