

FREEMEN COMMUNITY MEETING

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Wednesday, 7 October 2009

Held at: Linwood Centre, Linwood Lane

Who was there:

Councillor Dale Keeling

Councillor Bill Shelton



INFORMATION SHARING 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.

Ward Councillors and General Information

A chance to raise issues with Ward Councillors

Community Safety

Information about community safety issues

City Wardens

The local City Warden was available to discuss local issues.

Substance Misuse Consultation

A representative from the Drug & Alcohol Action Team gathered residents' views on the provision of substance misuse services

Police

Local police officers were available to talk about local issues

Local Involvement Network (LINK)

Information about the body that scrutinises health services

Highways and Residents' Parking

Information about local highways issues, including the proposed parking scheme

The Big Switch Off

Information about the event to promote energy saving

Citizens Eye Magazine

Information about this local community media organisation

Housing

Information about housing issues

Customer Services

Information about the Council's Customer 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.

12. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Keeling was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from Councillors. Apologies were received from Mark Hughenden.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Keeling declared a personal interest in the budget item, "Dog Waste Bins," as he had submitted the application.

15. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Freeman Community Meeting on 10 June 2009 were agreed as correct.

16. HIGHWAYS AND RESIDENTS' PARKING

Paul Commons, Team Leader, Traffic Regulation Team, explained that a consultation was taking place about the possible introduction of a residents' parking scheme in part of the Freeman Ward. This followed a previous consultation on a much larger area which was rejected. Paul explained that there had been more "yes" votes from the area now being consulted, so it was felt that the option of a smaller scheme was worth considering. He pointed out that the Council did not want to impose a scheme, and it depended entirely on whether a suitable majority of residents voted for it. Questionnaires had been hand delivered to all properties on the affected streets. Anyone who lived just outside the proposed area would not be consulted.

Discussion took place about the scheme and residents raised the following queries and were answered by Paul:

- 1) Some premises/homes didn't receive the questionnaire.
Assurance that all were hand delivered, but more can be supplied to anyone who asks.
- 2) Can we have more if lost/not received?
Yes
- 3) Concern about parking for businesses.
The scheme would be tailored to the area's needs if approved and not all spaces would be for residents – some bays would be for limited stays.

- 4) Lack of clarity on the form - some people thought they didn't have to fill it in if they had not got a car.
They don't have to, but the more we get in the better.
- 5) Why not issue permits just for Saturday match days?
This would cost the same as a full scheme, and problems have been reported with commuter parking in the week.
- 6) Why isn't more ticketing done on match days?
There is a limited amount of wardens. They are concentrated on the worst areas in the immediate vicinity of the stadium.
- 7) Why can't the football and rugby clubs be forced to provide a Park & Ride?
Also there are concerns about capacity increases.
Aylestone didn't want a park and ride. Clubs paid a fee to cover some improvements and we can't force them to do any more. If we refused planning permission on parking grounds, it would likely be overturned by the Planning Inspector.
- 8) Difficulties visiting friends in areas covered by parking schemes. It is an extra cost for people who have a lot of visitors.
We would not impose a scheme unless a good majority want it.
- 9) Rutland Avenue has been included even though we don't want it. It would reduce available spaces even further.
It has been included in the consultation as it would be affected if surrounding streets had the scheme, as more vehicles would try to park on streets without restrictions. Residents of the street can vote no.
- 10) If I didn't get the questionnaire or invitation to the meeting, how would I know about the consultation?
Details had been made available in many places, including the press, on line, on the BBC website – we've done as much as we can to draw attention to it.
- 11) Why aren't Shakespeare Street and Sheridan Street included? There will be a knock-on effect for these streets.
We had to draw a line somewhere. There is a clear barrier created by the main road. There was a high level of "no's" from the first consultation form these streets.
- 12) What if only a few reply and most say yes?
We would have to judge the situation to see if it was a sufficient response. If it wasn't we would not go ahead.

Councillor Keeling thanked Paul for the discussion.

17. DRUG AND ALCOHOL ACTION TEAM CONSULTATION

Mark Aspey from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) explained that substance misuse services had been in operation for many years and had helped a large amount of people. Improvements in services meant that it took much less time for someone to get help.

He explained that a consultation had been launched to find out from residents what services they thought were important and where they should be prioritised. Questionnaires were available. This consultation was taking place through to mid-November. Following this, a model would be designed, which would then be put to the public again to make sure that it was appropriate.

18. POLICE UPDATE

PCSO Jim Muddimer from the Saffron Lane Estate Beat gave an update on work of the Neighbourhood Policing Team. He introduced his colleagues, Jackie Berry from Saffron and Steve Barnes from Aylestone, both of which covered parts of the Freeman Ward.

Jim gave a presentation on the work of the team in the ward and it was noted that all crime, except for domestic violence had reduced. He said that operations had been carried out in the vicinity of the Linwood Centre and names of graffiti taggers had been obtained. A successful operation had been carried out near Stonesby Avenue seizing alcohol. Shifts had been changed to deal with upcoming Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas. He asked that residents let them know of specific issues.

Residents asked why the gates on the footpath to Meadow Gardens were still kept locked during the day, as they hindered residents. They felt that the gates should only be locked at night, and also felt that they didn't stop graffiti, as intended. They asked for this to be looked into as a priority.

19. CITY WARDEN

Barbara Whitcombe, City Wardens Manager, introduced the new City Warden for Freeman and Eyres Monsell, Scott Clark. Scott was an experienced warden and had transferred from Castle Ward.

Barbara distributed post cards which showed the issues they dealt with, a photograph so that residents could recognise them, and contact details. She outlined work that was being done in the area, including education work with schools. She asked anyone with contacts with the schools to encourage them to allow them to come in. Assemblies, lesson plans and games were available. Barbara said that prevention was cheaper than dealing with the problems.

Residents mentioned a problem with a build-up of leaves on Meadow Gardens, and Barbara said that she would ask the Cleansing Team to look at the issue.

Scott said that he was addressing a problem of drinkers using a bench on Saffron Lane near Jalaram News. The area had been cleaned and the bin moved closer. He had also talked to the drinkers to ask them to use the bin. More patrols had been arranged. Scott also mentioned that work had been done to stop people leaving bins

on the streets, resulting in a 65% reduction in the last two weeks. Barbara said that they were working with the Fire Brigade, as there had been several bin fires, some of which had been serious.

A resident thanked Scott for his work on Cavendish Road, as nearly all the bins had been removed.

20. CUSTOMER SERVICES

Nicola Newman, Call Centre Manager, explained the work of the Council's Customer Services. She explained that there was a variety of ways of getting in touch, including at contact centres, by phone, email letter and internet. Customer Services could offer advice and assistance with a full range of Council services, as well as having links with other agencies, such as the police, Welfare Rights and benefits services.

The Customer Services phone line was open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday, making it easier for people to get in touch.

The meeting discussed how Customer Services could help with waste issues, and advice was given about entitlement to bulk collection and garden waste collection.

A resident thanked Nicola for the service, and said that she had used Customer Services on a number of occasions and had received a very good service.

21. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGETS

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer, introduced applications for funding that had been received. The applications were discussed as follows:

B1 – the Saftas

The meeting agreed to support this application, as it was a strongly supported community initiative.

AGREED; that the meeting supports the application for £950 from the Ward Action Plan Fund.

B2 – Community Association Health and Safety Bid

It was noted that this application was to replace dangerous and unsuitable furniture and storage.

AGREED: that the meeting supports the application for £745.20 from the Ward Action Plan Fund.

B3 – Dog Waste Bins

AGREED: that the meeting supports the application for £646.40 from the Ward Action Plan Fund.

It was also noted that, since the June 10 2009 meeting, the Eyres Monsell Community Meeting had agreed to fund half of the application for mobility scooters. This matched the funding supported by the Freemen Community Meeting.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

HOUSING ISSUES

The Chair invited John Thomson, Neighborhood Housing Manager, to explain to the meeting the schemes that had been agreed for the annual environmental budget allocation. John stated that the proposals had been devised through consultation with tenants and groups of residents in the vicinity of the specified sites. The bids had then been approved by the grants panel.

A major piece of work had been approved for the overgrown land at the rear of the Fairway shops, near Heathcote Road and Neston Gardens. Contributions to funding were also being made by the Police Joint Action Group (JAG) and through the Housing budget. Work was to include removing poor condition trees, landscaping, adding chicanes to reduce speed of cyclists without hindering wheelchair/scooter users or people with pushchairs, provision of a play area with colourful matting and lighting improvement.

Other approved bids included the following:

- Installing privacy panels to some properties so that residents couldn't see into each others' properties when entering or leaving their homes.
- Security lights to selected bungalows
- Security lights to Neston Gardens
- Road markings on Montrose Road
- Flood lamps on Grace Road
- A pilot of noticeboards in communal areas of flats. If these were successful, they would be rolled out to all communal flat areas.

John also mentioned that the Council was to start building new homes for the first time in many years. Two sites in the ward had been identified. One site on Heather Road would have nine homes, as would the other site of the old depot on the Fairway. Plans for these sites would be made available on the Council's website and would have to go through the normal planning process.

SPEEDING TRAFFIC

A resident raised concerns about speeding vehicles, particularly on Knighton Lane, near the Post Office. The police agreed to pass this issue on for investigation.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Monday 18 January 2010, at 1.30pm, at the Wheatsheaf Theatre, Knighton Fields Road East.

Residents asked for an item on the next agenda regarding youth services, and this was agreed. Information about the Integrated Services Hubs and issues regarding use of the Kingfisher Youth Centre would be included.

23. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.49pm.