

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Wednesday, 6 October 2010

Held at: The Tudor Centre, Bewcastle Grove

Who was there:

Councillor Harshad Bhavsar
Councillor Annette Byrne
Councillor Colin Marriott

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.

Ward Councillors and General Information	Police Issues
Local Community Centres	Challenge and Support Service
City Warden Service	Domestic Violence
The Curve Theatre	Future Jobs Fund
One Pass	The Big Switch Off
Gypsy and Traveller Equality	LINK

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.

95. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Marriott was appointed Chair of the meeting.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Byrne declared a personal and prejudicial interest in budget item 10, application 1, Welcome Club. Councillor Byrne agreed to leave the meeting during the consideration of the funding application.

98. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Abbey Community Meeting held on 17 June 2010 were circulated and Members were asked to approve them as a correct record.

A member of the public stated that minute 92 - B7 (Unity Boxing Club application) did not accurately reflect that a vote had been taken and that the final decision made by

councillors to recommend approval of the application went against that vote. The member of the public also expressed concern that it appeared that the terms of reference relating to community meetings (which had been displayed at the meeting of 6th October) had been created in response to the complaint he lodged about the conduct of the meeting of 17 June.

Steve Letten, the Members Support Officer, explained that although called minutes, the recording system was only intended to capture the main points of the meeting and were not meant to be a detailed word for word account. He suggested that an amendment could be made to the minutes of the meeting of 17 June if the Members agreed to it. In response the Members asked for a fuller record of the item to be provided at the next meeting.

Steve Letten also explained that the terms of reference had existed since the inception of community meetings but that the Abbey Members had specifically asked for them to be on display at all future Abbey meetings following the events of 17 June. It was explained that the Members had thought it would be useful for the public to see the rules concerning the approval of grant applications and to understand the role of Members within this and the fact that there was no formal requirement for votes to be taken.

RESOLVED:

1. that the minutes of the meeting of 17 June be amended to include the comments made by the member of the public as detailed above.
2. that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed subject to the above amendment.

99. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER EQUALITY

Members agreed to hold this additional item regarding Gypsy and Traveller equality.

Pauline Burton, Leicestershire County Council, reported that GATE (Gypsy and Traveller Equality) was a group of Gypsies and Travellers who wanted to promote understanding between themselves and the settled community. Pauline introduced a Traveller Julie and her daughter Kelly.

Julie explained that she was a Traveller who lived in a caravan on an authorise site. On this site she pays rent, tax and utilities. She had the right to vote and prefers this way of life to living in a house. Kelly had chosen to live in a house, although did not lose her Gypsy status.

Pauline explained that children from traveller families, like any other children, needed the opportunity to develop their full potential. Educating someone without a permanent address could be difficult and as a result the population was largely illiterate. In addition to this the opportunities for young Traveller children to socialise with settled children could be extremely limited.

The meeting learned that Gypsies had contributed to society across a number of professional fields, such as becoming doctors, soldiers, police officers and athletes. Charlie Chaplin's grandma had been a Roma Gypsy and the footballer Freddie Eastwood had publicly stated he was proud of his Gypsy heritage.

The lives of Gypsies had changed over the years and these groups had become very diverse. As a result they often had different needs and agendas. Traditional values were similar to those aspired to by the many in the wider population.

In response to a question Julie explained that there was a lot of bad publicity regarding travellers and many people in both communities had misconceptions about each other. The programme aimed to break these barriers and allow friendships to develop.

Further clarity was sought in respect of why travellers had difficulty disposing of waste. It was noted that waste disposal facilities did not allow commercial vehicles onto the site. As the trailers were classed as commercial, permits were needed. On a permanent site, where rent was paid, bins were provided and they were entitled to the Councils bulk collection service. She noted that there was a need to educate travellers to understand the need to take rubbish; often the refuse collection was informed however the bags were pulled open before they arrived.

A query was made regarding access to veterinary care. It was explained that vets were called to the sites and cash was paid.

A member of the public invited the local travellers to the Abbey Ward firework display. It was noted that the display was near to where the traveller's animal were located and it was suggested that these might need to be moved back.

The Chair thanked Pauline and the Travellers for attending the meeting.

100. POLICING PRIORITIES

Sgt Michelle Zakoscielny, Leicestershire Constabulary, reported on policing in the Abbey Ward. She introduced the crime figures for the area. She explained that a number of figures had fallen including, burglary, anti-social behaviour and theft from cars.

Michelle reported that the English Defence League demonstration was taking place in Leicester on 9 October, which had been considerably reported in the Press. This was to be a static demonstration from 2-3.30pm on Humberstone Gate. There was also to be a counter demonstration by Unite Against Fascism. She thought it was important that people avoided the city as safety could not be guaranteed.

There were an extra thousand police deployed to the city from other authorities. A number of events had been put on outside of the city to help keep young people entertained, such as free access to Beaumont Leys leisure centre and the boxing club in conjunction with SureStart holding an event from 11 until 4pm. All the Abbey

police would be on duty in the Ward, although a number would be around the city end.

In response to an enquiry it was explained that on Saturday it could not be guaranteed that issues raised directly with an individual officers would be answered immediately. It was therefore recommended that for emergencies 999 should be called, there would be double the staff taking these calls.

Kimberley Stones, City Warden, explained that there were events on the Friday and Sunday in the City Centre to promote peace and not hate.

101. COMMUNITY SAFETY GOOD NEWS

Sgt Michelle Zakoscielny, Leicestershire Constabulary, reported that by working closely with the Housing Department the police were able to shut down a Crack House in the Abbey Ward. Michelle praised the people who bravely came forward to help in this operation. In addition she added that the police did everything possible to work with the community and stop these problems.

Michelle requested that any priorities for the area be submitted, if enough people requested the same thing this would become one of the police priorities.

102. HOUSING SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS UPDATE

John Thomson, Area Manager, attended the meeting to discuss the Future Jobs Fund and the Capital Programme.

John explained that the Future Jobs Fund was created to prepare young people aged 18 to 24 years old for work. The Housing Department had asked for a hundred young people, which were intended for a number of different roles. In the Abbey and Beaumont Leys area there were seventeen young people, which enabled additional work to be carried out and gave the young people references. There were more than seven hundred jobs created in Leicestershire through the fund.

The meeting praised the work carried out and the City Warden added that these young people had been useful in the cleanup days tidying shrubs and removing graffiti.

John reported that the Capital Expenditure for the Housing Department derived from sale of property and money borrowed. He explained that the Government allocated what could be borrowed and how these funds could be spent. He was working with customers and Councillors to identify areas of possible need. Following costing possible projects John would report back to the meeting.

The meeting learned that one suggestion by Councillor was on Hadrian Road and further suggestions were requested.

A resident queried when work would be completed on the Kinley Road flats, he explained that a lot of work had been carried out; however the railings were still in need of replacing. In response John noted that the work was funded through the Community Pay Back Orders. The Chair explained further that a number of hours had been allocated to this project, however there had not been enough left to carry out this work. John suggested that the railings could be included in the Capital Expenditure with a possible hard wearing material, he agreed investigate the cost.

103. HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, gave an update on highways maintenance issues on behalf of the Head of Highway Maintenance.

The meeting learned that the Highways Officers had undertaken regular safety inspections within the ward and had responded, since September 2009, to seventy reports from members of the public concerned about highway defects. As a result a hundred and twelve orders had been raised to address the urgent defects that met the Councils safety intervention criteria.

Following a comprehensive review of planning expenditure over the last few months, £613,000 had been reallocated to highway maintenance from the Transport Capital programme, £207,000 from the winter damage emergence funding from the Department of Transport and £245,000 had been contributed from the City Council. This funding would be spent on highway maintenance with £75,000 being specifically allocated to various streets in the Abbey ward.

The Abbey Ward streets where work would be carried out were, Soar Lane, All Saints Road, Abbey Park Road, Abbey Lane, Heacham Drive, Marwood Road and Holderness Road.

In addition it was noted that as a result of this review there had been a delay to the carriageway work to Abbey Lane.

Concern was expressed that residents were waiting for a proper road for the Abbey Rise and Kinley Road area. The resident noted that there were a number of large pot holes, which could cause a serious accident and that only a partial repair had been undertaken on Halifax Drive. He enquired why this had been left off the highways list. It was suggested that the Cabinet Lead for Regeneration and Transport be invited to view the road.

104. CITY WARDENS

Kimberley Stones, City Warden, reported that she was usually present in the ward in the daytime. One of the major priorities was to prevent dog fouling, however this did not normally occur during working hours. She requested that residents report instances to enable wardens to know where they were needed.

Kimberley explained that the team were working with various other units to prevent problems in the area, such as prevent graffiti and fly-tipping. She noted that there would be photos available at the next meeting.

105. ABBEY WARD BUDGET

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, presented the applications that had been submitted to the meeting. In addition he explained that due to the uncertainty over future budgets the Councillors were seeking to encourage groups to become more independent, especially those who already received funding in the last couple of years.

Fast tracked items:

Friends of Mowmacre - £400 had been agreed before the meeting from the Ward Community Fund

Police - £487 had been agreed before the meeting from the Ward Action Plan Fund.

Applications:

Councillor Byrne, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Welcome Club, withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

Welcome Club

The Chair reported that the group had applied for funding on a few occasions. Members felt it was fair to part fund the day trip with half the requested money. Concern was expressed that the cost of transport was high and that the group might need more money, however Members believed the group had suitable funds to cover this cost.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £250 and no new applications from the Welcome Club until 2012/13.

Councillor Byrne returned to the meeting.

Tuesday Social Bingo Club

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £65 and no new applications from the Tuesday Social Bingo Club until 2012/13.

Thursday Social Bingo

Members expressed concern regarding spending funds on gifts and agreed allocation of funds should only be spent on the meal. Members of the public queried if the Tuesday and Thursday Social Bingo was the same group. The Chair noted from the applications that the Thursday group had nearly three times more members.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £70 and no new applications from the Thursday Social Bingo until 2012/13.

Friends of Abbey Park

The applicant reported that the application was made to help improved certain areas and pathways, enhance the environment and provide the opportunity for staff to work with school children. The Chair explained that half the money would be allocated as the park was used by all wards. In response the applicant explained that events were targeted at local schools. Sgt Michelle Zakoscielny suggested that they submitted an application to the Joint Action Group for match funding.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £1,500.

UR Choice Young Peoples Project

The Chair reported that Members would like more information before making a decision on this application.

RESOLVED:

that the application be deferred.

Stocking Farm Tenants

It was noted that the fete would take place on 7 November and that the application was match funded through the Healthy Living Budget.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £665, and no new applications from the Stocking Farm Tenants until 2012/13.

Late Applications:

Members agreed to take the following late applications.

Little Tykes

The Chair explained that as the last application was recent Members felt that it was appropriate to only half fund the trip to Twin Lakes.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £422, and no new applications from Little Tykes until 2012/13.

Thursday Night Bingo Club

It was noted that they were applying for funds for a train ride trip.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £395, and no new applications from Thursday Night Bingo Club until 2012/13.

Mrs Shorten

It was reported that the application sought funds for taxi fares to the Forum for Older People for two representatives from the St Patricks Afternoon Club.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £75.

Festivals Unit

It was explained that the application was for twenty young people to work on a project before attending the Abbey Park bonfire. Members were concerned that the application was late for the project to start in two weeks and felt that funding this Council activity would encourage other services with budget difficulties to apply. Members noted that the firework displays would not be affected by not funding this project. The firework displays would take place on 5th and 6th November.

RESOLVED:

that the application be rejected.

The meeting heard that the funding applications that the Councillors agreed to support would be passed to the Leader and Cabinet Lead for approval.

106. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.