

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

7:00 pm, Wednesday, 16 June 2010

Held at: Robert Hall Memorial Baptist Church Hall, 147 Narborough Road, Leicester LE3 0PD

Who was there:

Councillor Andy Connelly

Councillor Sarah Russell

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

Police Issues

Members of the public were able to talk to the local Neighbourhood Team

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.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Russell was elected as Chair for the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

a) Residents' Parking Scheme

In response to a question, the Chair apologised that it had not yet been possible to produce a newsletter regarding the residents' parking scheme, (minute 13, "Minutes of Previous Meeting", referred).

The possibility of including an article in the City Council's Link magazine would be considered. If it was not possible to include an article in the next edition, information on the following would be included on the agenda for the next meeting:-

- i) the outcome of the vote on whether the parking scheme should be introduced; and
- ii) how the success, or otherwise, of the scheme would be judged.

In the meantime, the Council continued to work with the police on parking issues in the Ward and residents living in the area in which the residents' parking scheme would operate would be sent a leaflet before the next meeting.

It was noted that the next Westcotes Community Meeting would focus on issues in Bede Park.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Consideration be given to including an article on the residents' parking scheme in the next edition of the Link magazine	Peter Cozens	Before the next meeting
If it is not possible to include an article in the next edition of Link, information on the following to be included on the agenda for the next meeting:- a) the outcome of the vote on whether the parking scheme should be introduced; and b) how the success, or otherwise, of the scheme	Peter Cozens / Elaine Baker	Next meeting

would be judged		
Residents living in the area in which the residents' parking scheme will operate be sent a leaflet before the next meeting	Chris Middleton	Before the next meeting

b) Graffiti

It was noted that the Halifax bank had not refused to have the graffiti on the side of its building removed, (minute 15, "Environmental Issues", referred).

c) Bins on Streets

A member of the community reported that further bins had appeared on the streets. The Chair reminded the meeting that it was useful if such things also could be reported between meetings, so that they could be dealt with as quickly as possible. (Minute 15, "Environmental Issues", referred)

d) Dog Waste Bins

It was noted that the dog waste bins for Great Central Way had been ordered, (minute 17, "Ward Community Budget 2009/10", referred).

Consideration would be given to how the bin with which problems were being experienced in Bede Park could be prevented from becoming over full.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Consideration be given to how the bin with which problems were being experienced in Bede Park could be prevented from becoming over full.	Dave Flavelle	Before the next meeting

4. THE MANOR HOUSE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

The Chair advised the meeting that no decision had been taken to date on the future of the Manor House Neighbourhood Centre, stating that she was aware that a petition was circulating, although she had not seen it yet. The Chair then advised the meeting that she wanted to hear the views of as many people as possible, including views on what they would like to see happen to the Centre.

Ann Habens, Director of Safer and Stronger Communities with Leicester City Council, and Steve Goddard, Head of Community Services with Leicester City Council, were present to answer any queries relating to Manor House Neighbourhood Centre.

Ann Habens stressed that no decisions had been taken about the Centre, as options for its use were still being explored. Ann Habens displayed a map at the meeting that showed other facilities in the area and where services in the area currently were being delivered.

Residents suggested that a lunch club and bowls sessions could be held at the Centre, as they would provide something for older people to go to. The Evergreens Group, a social club for older people, also used to meet at the Centre on a Tuesday afternoon, after the lunch club.

Ann Habens advised the meeting that, in considering services that could be offered at the Centre, account had to be taken of the fact that this was an old building, which needed considerable investment to bring it up to standard, in particular in relation to health and safety issues. This was one reason why there had been fairly low usage of the building before its current closure.

In addition, community facilities were available at a number of other venues in the area, but it was recognised that they could be some way from where people lived and that people liked using the Manor House. It also was noted that the lunch club that previously had been held there had been run by the Community Services Officer, as this was not the sort of activity that these Centres usually offered.

Members of the community suggested that:-

- The Council had used the death of the Community Services Officer to close the Centre and keep it closed, despite the need in the area for a community centre. There had been no problems with the operation of the Centre before the Community Services Officer died;
- The Manor House had been used by older people and youth groups throughout the year, with the green at the front providing an ideal place for young people to play safely;
- Equipment in the Centre could be used elsewhere while the future of the Centre was decided;
- The green area could be developed for youth use;
- The front of the building stated that it was a young people's centre, but the young were actively discouraged from using the Centre by a lot of users. A change in management style and culture therefore was needed;
- If the Centre had been advertised more widely, more people would have used it;
- One reason that people did not use the Centre was that facilities were provided in the park. However, these had been allowed to deteriorate, which made the social problems in the area worse;
- The Centre was conveniently placed for people from both Rowley Fields and the West End area, so served a lot of people. As such, the Centre should be opened again and its operation monitored;

- The Centre was a grand, historic building that should not be demolished, but should be preserved as a heritage site. This was supported by the meeting;
- Some people did not like going to the Centre, as it could be very dark in the area and the young people there could be intimidating; and
- Some people were unhappy that the green area had been fenced off.

In response, the following points were noted:-

- The number of people using the Centre had reduced significantly in recent years. For example, between April and October 2009 there had been 12,000 users of the Centre. However, in the same period, over 23,000 people had used the Tudor Centre, over 64,000 had used the BRITE Centre and over 112,000 had used the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre;
- The Centre had been advertised in the same way as other centres had, but members of the public had not responded to this;
- Approximately 5 years ago, members of the local community, along with a Council officer, had established a user group, to try to encourage more people to use the Centre, but the number of participants in this had dropped to the extent that the group no longer functioned;
- When the previous Community Services Officer died, a number of services did not want to return to the Centre. This had led to the decision to review how the Centre was used and what services or facilities people wanted to see there;
- The green area in front of the Centre was school playing fields land, which had been fenced off after it was used by Travellers. Police advice had been received that the green area was not educational land, as it was not fenced off. Fencing therefore had been erected and the gates improved to stop anti-social behaviour there and to stop Travellers coming back on to the site. It now appeared that this had simply displaced the problems and this would be investigated. Officers also had been asked to investigate whether it could be used as general open space;
- There had been a number of different sets of play equipment on the green area, but they had all been damaged by arson and/or vandalism to the extent that they became unsafe;
- A debate needed to be held on what facilities were needed in the area. This should include whether the Manor House was the best place to provide these, the quality of services that could be offered to the community and the type of building that people wanted to use;
- In view of the Council's current budget restrictions, funding for any improvements to the Centre would have to be prioritised against other projects;

- The Council could only transfer assets to the community, not liabilities. Therefore, the Centre could not be transferred to the community to operate in its present condition;
- It was recognised that the building would deteriorate if not used. The Ward Members expressed the view that they would not be happy for it to be either demolished, as it was officially recognised as a Building of Local Interest, or left empty;

Some concern was expressed that, although people were alarmed by the death of the previous Community Services Officer, they wanted to continue to use the Centre. It also was reported that staff at the Centre had been encouraged to not have user groups in the Centre.

A resident reported that:-

- All of the lights in the Centre had been turned off. This had been reported in November 2009 and several times since, but nothing had been done about it. Also, the grass at the Centre was not being cut.

Ann Habens explained that there had been a problem with the fuses at the Centre and undertook to look in to why they were still off. She also undertook to investigate why the grass was not being cut.

- He had a tenancy at the Centre and had worked for the Council for a number of years, but had not been contacted since the Centre closed, including not being asked if he needed any assistance following the events surrounding the death of the Centre's Community Services Officer.

The Chair apologised on behalf of the Council that he had not been contacted, as she was under the impression that officers had been going in to the Centre. She also explained that the Code of Conduct for Councillors did not allow them to become involved in an individual's job. However, the tenant's details had been passed to officers so they could address the situation, including determining what support he needed.

- He had to move young people on from the Centre, as they were causing a nuisance in the area. In the evenings, anti social behaviour also occurred in cars using the alley by the Centre.

The Police explained that there had been a history of anti-social behaviour around that area, but they had not received any reports recently. Anyone experiencing or witnessing anti-social behaviour was asked to report it to the Police. In the meantime, the Police offered to discuss these issues with the resident and report back to the next meeting.

Ann Habens advised the meeting that, once options for the future use of the Centre had been identified, they would be put out for consultation. This analysis would include considering what currently was available, where it was located and where

there were gaps in provision for the short, medium and long term. It was hoped that consultation could start in July or August 2010.

Residents welcomed the proposal to consult the community, as it was felt that nothing would work at the Centre unless they were involved and people would not attend the Centre unless they felt involved. This included ensuring that an honest result was publicised.

The meeting was reminded that consideration also needed to be given to what would happen with other facilities in the area if the Manor House was brought up to standard. However, it was recognised that, the longer the Manor House was left, the more it would deteriorate and the more it would cost to bring up to the required standard. At present, running costs alone for the Centre, (without any improvements), were approximately £47,000 per year. Ann Habens therefore suggested that the Centre would need to generate more than that per year, in order to provide funds for maintenance and emergency work.

The Chair advised that a meeting had been held with a private developer who had approached the Council with a proposal to create a 5-a-side football facility on the green area, (on a similar basis to the current Goals facility). Under this proposal, the school would provide the land and the developer would build the pitches. These pitches then would be used by the school during the day and hired out for public use at weekends. In addition, the former telephone building would be developed for changing facilities and other community facilities also would be provided in that building.

The Ward Councillors reported that they had some concerns about what residents would feel about this proposal, especially those whose homes backed on to it. It also was unclear how the project would be funded, as the Council had no uncommitted capital funds available.

Although these were very tentative suggestions, the Ward Councillors invited comments on them, stressing that they were not linked in any way with any decisions on the future of the Manor House Neighbourhood Centre.

It was questioned whether the developer intended to buy or lease the land and, if a lease was proposed, how long this would be for. In reply, the meeting noted that this had not been discussed, as the meeting held was an initial one, to discuss the outline plans.

During the ensuing discussion on this, it also was noted that, in all of the spatial surveys that the Council was required to do, this area was shown as lacking in green space. As such, some open area would have to be provided. Also, there were very specific rules about what land designated as school playing fields could be used for.

There was some support for the principle of providing a Goals-style facility. However, residents questioned how this would fit with the planning application being submitted by St Mary's School for a car park and classroom on that site. The Ward Councillors stated that they were not aware of this application.

In conclusion, the meeting was reminded that further information would be made available over the summer and anyone interested on being on the formal consultation list was invited to leave their details with the Members Support Officer.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Investigations to be undertaken in to why the lights at the Centre are still switched off and the grass is not being cut	Ann Habens	As soon as possible
The anti-social behaviour being experienced around the Manor House Neighbourhood Centre to be discussed with the resident who reported it and a report made to the next Community Meeting	Police	Next meeting

5. CITY WARDEN SERVICE

Graham Smith, City Warden with Leicester City Council, presented the six-month action plan for the Ward.

The meeting noted the following:-

- The City Warden had started making regular patrols with the local Police beat team, varying the days and times that he was with them;
- A priority for all Wards over the next two years was the removal of domestic bins from streets;
- The dog waste bins for which a grant had been approved had been purchased and would be installed shortly, (minute 17, "Ward Community Budget 2009/10", 10 March 2010 referred);
- It was hoped that the police, some in uniform and some in plain clothes, could patrol the area from the De Montfort University to Aylestone, to make sure that dog fouling was kept to a minimum;
- The City Warden was working with the Police to visit fast-food outlets, to ask the occupiers to ensure that the fronts of their premises were kept clear of litter. Funding for litter pick kits that could be offered to local businesses had been requested, (see minute 7 below);
- Nuisance parking around the Upperton Road area would be targeted. Members of the community were invited to report any incidences of this, (for example, people working on vehicles on the road), so they could be investigated;

- The City Warden service was willing to attend any events such as fetes and to have a stand there to explain the work done by the service;
- Although the situation was improving, Bede Park currently looked untidy, due to there being a lot of litter there. The City Warden spent time in the Park talking to people, to encourage them to keep the Park looking tidy;
- The City Council shortly would be starting a City-wide anti-graffiti campaign; and
- Leaflets were available at the meeting setting out the services provided by the City Warden.

The meeting welcomed the work being done to stop litter being dropped in Bede Park. In particular, the area between the business park and footpath was in a bad condition, but would be a good place to put picnic tables and possibly some kind of fire pits.

It was noted that most litter in Bede Park currently came from Tesco and Sainsbury's. The Council was holding on-going talks with both stores about the types of items they sold, (for example, glass bottles with removable tops).

The meeting felt that, although the number of rubbish bins provided was improving, they were not large enough. It was noted that, when large bins had been installed previously, they had been stolen. Another aspect of the problem was litter dropped by people eating fast food, (particularly at weekends).

It also was noted that the City Wardens could issue on-the-spot fines to people caught littering. Although the Police had powers to stop people littering, it had been agreed that their resources should be focussed on more serious crimes. As such, it had been agreed in partnership with the Police that the Council's civil powers would be used.

The Police explained that issues such as dog fouling, littering, or speeding traffic were the sort of issues that could be included in the Police Neighbourhood Priority Plan, which identified the main issues of concern to the residents of a particular area. At present, the priorities for the Westcotes Ward were reducing the impact of anti-social behaviour, illegal parking (for example, so as to cause an obstruction), and graffiti. Other issues also were prioritised on an ad hoc basis as appropriate.

AGREED:

that the meeting's appreciation of the work done by the City Council's cleansing staff be recorded.

6. POLICE MATTERS IN THE WESTCOTES WARD

Sergeant David Shields, Neighbourhood Sergeant for Westcotes with Leicestershire Constabulary, advised the meeting that there had been a significant reduction in the

number of robberies in the area and the use of a double crew in the Police anti-social behaviour vehicle was working well.

With regard to the anti-social behaviour vehicle, it was noted that, if members of the public let the Police know about anti-social behaviour when it was occurring, the Police vehicle would visit the location if possible and deal with the incident. This service was available every day of the week, usually between 5.00 pm and 11.00 pm, and had already proved to be very effective.

PC Sam Perry, Neighbourhood Officer for Westcotes with Leicestershire Constabulary, introduced himself to the meeting, explaining that he was based at the Hinckley Road Local Policing Unit. He advised the meeting that:-

- Reported crime in the area was down on last year;
- At the last community meeting he had reported an increase in robberies along the canal towpath. Since then, some suspects had been arrested and, although investigations were ongoing, the number of robberies there had decreased significantly; and
- A meeting had been held with Probation Service representatives to discuss the Justice See Justice Done scheme. This involved offenders clearing “hot spots” of litter, cutting back hedges and improving the appearance of the area. A further report on this would be made in due course. In the meantime, it was hoped that there could be some high profile media coverage of the scheme.

A resident reported that a lot of damage recently had been done to cars in the area around Lancaster Road. Sergeant Shields advised that the Police were aware of a spate of damage that appeared to be random. Patrols in the area had been increased, but it had not been possible to identify any culprits. The amount of damage had now reduced.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
A further report to be made on the Justice Seen Justice Done programme	Police	As appropriate

7. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET 2010/11

The meeting was reminded that an application for funding, (from Westcotes Library), had been circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that, since the agenda had been circulated, a joint application for funding had been received from the Leicester City Council City Warden service and Leicestershire Constabulary. This requested £355 for the purchase of 50 litter pickers. The application was tabled at the meeting and a copy is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that funding of £572.10 from the Ward Community Fund be supported for the purchase of play mats and tub chairs by Westcotes Library for use in a children's area in that Library; and
- 2) that funding of £355.00 from the Ward Community Fund be supported for the purchase of 50 litter pickers by the Leicester City Council City Warden service and Leicestershire Constabulary for use by local businesses.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Arrangements for Next Meeting

It was noted that the main topic for the next meeting would be Bede Park. Areas for discussion included the possibility of erecting a fence around the play area and the future of the land at the back of Tesco.

With regard to the latter, the land currently was owned by Everards brewery, but it was boarded off and not used. The current legal covenants on the land were being reviewed, with a view to either changing or removing them. The Ward Members had asked the Leader of the City Council to consider buying this land for community use and officers had been instructed to approach Everards for this purpose. A further report on this would be made at the next meeting.

9. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.38 pm

Community Fund Proposal Form

Please read the Guide to the Community Fund before you fill in this form

Then complete Section 1: Budget Proposal.

If you are proposing to deliver the project yourself, please complete Section 2: Delivery agency as well. We can help you with this or do it for you – see who to contact in the **Guide to the Community Fund**.

Continue or separate sheets if you need to, or expand the boxes if you are filling in the form electronically.

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

14 JUN 2010

Section 1: Budget Proposal

RECEIVED
MEMBERS' SUPPORT

1. Name of Ward

WESTCOTES

2. Title of proposal

LITTER PICKERS

3. Name of group or person making the proposal

CITY WARDENS & POLICE

4. Short description of proposal. Please include information on **how the money will be spent, who will benefit, when they will benefit, and how we will know when the proposal has been successful.**

It is important that your answer to this question is clear, because we will only pay the costs when we can see evidence that the outcomes you describe here have been achieved. You can provide further details in your supporting information if you want to.

Street Litter Control within the ward. The Local Police beat team and the city warden are doing an initiative with the businesses to keep the areas around there business clears of all litter.

With this in mind if we provided a litter picker for the business we are giving them every kind of help to enable them to do this.

If they do not keep to there part of the intitative, then we would go to possible enforcement action.

5. Have you provided supporting information?

Tick if yes

6. What is the total cost to the Community Meeting?

7. How have you estimated or calculated the cost? Please show each item of expenditure and say whether it is an estimate or an actual cost.

Item	Cost £	Estimate or actual cost?
50 Litter Pickers	£7.10 each	estimate
Total	£355.00	

8. Have you tried to get funding for this project from anywhere else, either in the Council or from another organisation? If so, please give details

9. Who proposed the project? Please provide contact details.

Name of contact person	Graham Smith (City Warden)
Your position in organisation or group	
Name of organisation or group	LCC City Wardens
Address	
Phone number 07971326304	Email Graham.smith2@leicester.gov.uk


Section 2: Delivery agency (this could be a single person, group of people or a group or organisation)

10. Who will deliver the project? Please provide contact details.

Name of contact person	Graham Smith
Your position in organisation or group	City Warden
Name of organisation or group	LCC
Address	
Phone number 07971326304	Email graham.smith2@leicester.gov.uk

11. Declaration

I have read the *Guide to the Community Fund* and I accept the arrangements described in that guide. I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I will inform the council immediately if any of the information I have given on the form changes.

Name	GRAHAM SMITH
Signature	
Date	14/6/10

Please send this completed form back to:

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