

Westcotes Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 8 March 2011

Held at: Main Hall, East West Community Project, 10 Wilberforce Road, Leicester LE3 0BG

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:-

Westcotes Library

Members of the public were able to find out about the services on offer at Westcotes Library

Community Meeting Budgets & Enquiries

Members of the public were able to make general enquiries and talk to their local Councillors

Police Issues

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

City Warden Service

The City Wardens team was present to discuss residents' concerns

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.

32. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Russell was elected as Chair for the meeting.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they had in the business on the agenda and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

No such interests were declared.

34. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

35. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Councillor Connelly advised the meeting that four planning applications for sites in Westcotes Ward had been considered at the meeting of the Council's Planning and Development Control Committee held on 18 January 2011. The Ward Members had made representations on each of these applications.

- **Westcotes Drive**

This application was for the redevelopment of the former factory site in to housing, (but not student accommodation).

Following concerns that the development initially proposed would not be in keeping with the area, the application had been amended, so that the line of the building would be in line with other properties on the road and the type of dwelling had been changed to six three-bed properties and two two-bed ones. The two-bed properties would front on to Shaftesbury Road. A small off-street car park also would be provided.

The provision of three-bed properties was particularly welcome, as there was a shortage of this sort of property in the Ward.

- **Student Accommodation on Upperton Road**

This application was for the redevelopment of the old Network Rail site.

The applicant originally had wanted to build a 15-storey accommodation block, but following consultation this had been changed to a block with a maximum height of seven stories. This had been accepted by the Committee.

As part of the development, a Section 106 Agreement had been entered in to for £100,000 to be provided for the development of green space. The Ward Members did not want this to only be considered for use for a ball court, but hoped that the Community Meeting could be consulted on how the money should be spent.

- Duns Lane / Western Boulevard – De Montfort University Leisure Centre

The University had stated that the Leisure Centre would be open to the public and a note to the applicant had been included in the permission to that effect. The University also had stated that its prices for use of the facilities would be comparable to charges made for use of the Council's leisure centres.

It was hoped that building work could start in April 2011.

- Braunstone Gate: Narborough Road Retail Park

This was the site of the former MFI store. The Committee had approved its redevelopment for use for a supermarket, which the Ward Members generally supported.

It was noted that this development was by a developer, not a particular supermarket. The supermarket moving on to the site was likely to be announced in March 2011. It would have been preferable if the application had come directly from a supermarket, so that direct negotiations could have been held on matters such as how staff would be recruited and what that supermarket's policy was on controlling the use of shopping trolleys

A survey had been carried out and, although some people spoken to opposed this development, the majority supported it. Some people saw this development as a good way to regenerate a derelict site and some welcomed it as an opportunity to increase local employment. When asked if they would do their main food shopping at this supermarket, the general view was that that would depend on which supermarket moved on to the site, but they would continue to use local shops for the rest of their shopping. As a large number of people in the Ward did not have a car, nearly everyone interviewed welcomed the chance to have a local supermarket that could be accessed on foot or by taxi.

The developer had indicated that people would still be able to park on the site when using local businesses in Braunstone Gate.

Councillor Connelly reported that the Leicester Mercury had wrongly reported that he had said that a supermarket was needed, but he had said that some much needed housing provision had been made.

Councillor Connelly then reported that a retrospective planning application was scheduled to be considered by the Council's Planning and Development Control Committee on 1 March 2011. This was an application to convert the property at 10 Westcotes Drive from a hotel to a hostel, with an officer recommendation that it be refused.

The Ward Members only heard late in the afternoon on the day of the meeting that the application had been withdrawn, following officer advice to the applicant. The Ward Members had lodged a formal complaint about the way in which this had been dealt with, the outcome of which was awaited.

As the application had been withdrawn, it was not possible for the Council to take enforcement action against the hotel / hostel. However, the Planning and Development Control Committee had agreed that, if no further application was received by 18 April 2011, a report should be made to the Committee about taking enforcement action. At present, people visiting the hostel also were using the rough car park on Filbert Street without permission.

During discussion on these applications, it was asked if any action was being taken in relation to another hostel in Westcotes Drive that it was believed did not have planning permission. The Ward Members reported that the hostel at 18 Westcotes Drive had planning permission, but investigations were needed in to whether reference had been made to the correct parts of Council policy in granting this permission.

Specific planning permission had not been given for the hostel at 20 Westcotes Drive, but the owners had been advised that planning permission was not needed, as the property's current use was so close to that for which planning permission had been granted.

The Ward Members would continue to press for enforcement action in regard to the hostel at 10 Westcotes Drive, but in the meantime consideration was being given to other ways in which action could be taken, (for example, possibly under human rights legislation due to loss of quality of life for local residents).

The Chair reported that the Ward Members received more representations about hostels than any other planning issue. A meeting therefore had been held with some residents to discuss establishing a residents' association.

In response to a query about the development on Paton Street / Crow Lane, Councillor Connelly advised that this application was for two five-storey blocks of flats and one four-storey block. Although this development was not specifically branded as, or designed for, students, as with any residential properties they could be occupied by students. Councillor Connelly also advised that he would be requesting that this planning application be submitted to the Council's Planning and Development Control Committee for determination.

Concern was raised that a lot of development was happening in the Ward, but no additional infrastructure was being provided. The Chair explained that the new Local Development Framework was more flexible than previous systems and gave more

opportunities to determine what was delivered, (for example, through Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents). An example of this was the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance on the provision of green space as part of developments.

It was suggested that additional green space could be acquired by extending Bede Park, (for example, by terracing the area near the river and/or opening up the closed walk way). Another option could be to develop the Quay area as green space, (particularly if the supermarket moving on to the former MFI site removed some of the trees there).

It was noted that the number of rats seen in the area seemed to be increasing. The Council offered a free rat control service and also designated Pest Action Zones in areas where there were historical and/or current reports of problems with pests. If a zone was designated, all properties within that zone would be treated, rather than trying to treat individual properties, and advice was given on how to prevent pests from returning.

In response to a query, it was noted that planning permission had not been granted to turn the Westcotes Pub in to luxury flats and the Ward Members were not aware of a planning application having been submitted for this.

36. POLICE ISSUES IN THE WESTCOTES WARD

Inspector Bill Knopp introduced himself to the meeting, explaining that officers from the Neighbourhood Beat Team apologised for not being at the meeting, but they were involved in a search for a missing person. Inspector Knopp advised:-

- There had been 14 incidents of anti-social behaviour in the Ward during last month. Although there was no obvious pattern to these, it was twice as many incidents as had been experienced in the same month last year;
- The number of burglaries had increased to 41 in the last three months. A group of people recently had been arrested who it was believed were responsible for some of these;
- There was a long-term burglary problem in the Westcotes area. Rates were decreasing across the City, but they were not decreasing in Westcotes as quickly as in other areas, which meant that burglary rates were high here compared to other parts of the City. Some of this was due to the high transient population and the type of property, but some was drug-related; and
- Theft from motor vehicles also had increased in the Ward. This was mostly the theft of registration plates, which it was thought could then be used in “drive away” thefts of fuel from petrol stations. Clutch screws were available from the Neighbourhood Police Team, which could be used to prevent registration plates from being removed.

Inspector Knopp then introduced Marion Lewis, Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator, who had been working on re-launching Neighbourhood Watch. Marian Lewis explained her work and gave a presentation on the re-launch of Neighbourhood Watch, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

During this presentation and the ensuing discussion, particular attention was drawn to the following points:-

- During 2010, £1 million had been awarded to build the sustainability of Neighbourhood Watch nationally. Part of this had been the development of a new logo, and “brand repositioning” through the adoption of the Our Watch message;
- Statistics showed that residents in areas with Neighbourhood Watch schemes were over 300 times less likely to be a victim of crime than residents in other areas;
- Membership of Neighbourhood Watch was free and every scheme was registered with the Police. There currently were 240,000 Neighbourhood Watch members in Leicestershire;
- A new website had been set up and could be found at www.ourwatch.org.uk;
- In order to encourage more people to join Neighbourhood Watch, especially younger people, a virtual membership scheme had been started. Virtual members also were advised of “real” meetings in their areas, so they could make contact with other members if they wished. Information on this could be found on the Our Watch website; and
- If anyone interested in joining Neighbourhood Watch did not have access to a computer, details of schemes could be obtained from the Police;
- When anyone signed up to Neighbourhood Watch, they could choose how they received messages and other information, (for example, by e-mail or telephone), and at what times of day; and
- Crimes could not be reported through Neighbourhood Watch. Established reporting methods should be used.

37. CITY WARDEN SERVICE

Barbara Whitcombe, City Warden Team Manager, gave an introduction to the City Council’s One Clean Leicester initiative, explaining that a new method of reporting environmental problems such as litter or graffiti was via a free downloadable application for smart phones. Further details on this initiative are attached at the end of these minutes for information.

Photographs also could be sent via this application and, if appropriate, they would be published on the City Council’s website. Once received, the complaint would be

allocated to the appropriate team and the sender of the message would receive an acknowledgement. The sender also would receive confirmation when the complaint had been resolved. Progress with reported incidents could be followed on www.springcleanleicester.blogspot.com.

Complaints and problems still could be reported in the usual ways, such as text, e-mail or via City Wardens or Ward Councillors, but the new scheme enabled complaints to be dealt with more quickly. For example, sending a photograph of the problem in question could save time, because it could help ensure that the most appropriate response was given.

Issues that could be reported included abandoned and nuisance vehicles, bins on streets, dog fouling and fly posting. However, it was noted that, in order to enter private land to resolve environmental problems, permission was needed from the landowner.

It had been found that, if graffiti was removed as soon as it was done, it often did not return. Efforts also were being made to encourage people to be more responsible about what they threw away. Everyone therefore was encouraged to report areas needing cleaning up as soon as possible.

Barbara Whitcombe advised that income from Fixed Penalty Notices was used to buy items to further the work of the City Wardens. For example, some of the income recently had been used to buy 10,000 “stubbies”, in which used cigarette ends could be placed.

In response to a query, it was noted that, although there had been a delay in receiving the funding previously agreed for a large litter bin on the Great Central Way, it should have been installed by now. The Ward Councillors undertook to investigate why it had not been installed yet.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Investigation to be undertaken in to why the large litter bin has not been installed yet on Great Central Way	Ward Councillors	As soon as possible

38. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET 2010/11

i) Westcotes Library – Promotion of the Library

AGREED:

That funding of £382.40 be approved from the Ward Action Plan Budget to Westcotes Library for the purchase of a portable presentation system and a portable folding display system.

ii) Kaleidoscope Arts Project – Support the Manor

Amanda Leandro, of Kaleidoscope Arts, introduced herself to the meeting and explained that this project had been set up to support the Manor House Neighbourhood Centre.

The Centre had been given until June 2011 to get 2,000 people through its doors, before a decision was made on whether the Centre should stay open. It therefore was proposed to hold taster sessions, workshops and a one-day event, to encourage people to use it. These events also would provide people with “soft” learning skills that could be used in other situations, for example to help get in to employment.

The Chair advised the meeting that under-spent funds from the 10,000 tress project had been used to keep the Centre open until June.

AGREED:

that funding of £1,000 be approved from the Ward Action Plan Budget to Kaleidoscope Arts towards its work to support the Manor Neighbourhood Centre.

iii) Love Hoops Foundation – Active Women

The meeting was advised that this application had been agreed via the “fast track” urgency procedure and had been presented for information.

NOTED:

that £250 had been approved to the Love Hoops Foundation towards the Active Women project as follows:-

- a) £86.47 from the Ward Action Plan Budget;
- b) £32.46 from the Ward Community Fund; and
- c) £131.07 from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund.

iv) Bethany Court Leicester – Computer for Communal Lounge

AGREED:

that funding of £2,000 be approved for the purchase by Bethany Court Leicester of the following items for use in the communal lounge at Bethany Court:-

- 2 computers;
- 2 computer chairs
- a printer and cartridges;
- 2 monitors;
- consumables (such as paper and ink); and
- insurance for these items.

v) Councillor Sarah Russell / Leicester City Council Environmental Services – Briton Street Clean Up

Councillor Russell advised the meeting that, although the pavement in Briton Street was very clean, pedestrians dropped rubbish over walls and household rubbish accumulated in front gardens. Briton Street had been suggested as a good location to pilot a “full street” clean up, as it had the heaviest pedestrian traffic, (apart from Narborough Road).

As this was a pilot project, it was not possible to provide an actual cost for the work, so the sum of £1,000 had been requested. If the scheme cost less than this, the clean up would continue beyond Briton Street, and any costs above that would be borne by the cleansing service.

Concern was expressed that some of the property to be cleared was owned by people who were able to afford to clear it themselves. The Ward Councillors advised the meeting that this had been considered, but some of the rubbish to be cleared had not been left by the tenants or landlords, (for example, having blown on to the property, or been left by people passing along the road).

As well as clearing the front areas of the properties, work would be undertaken to ensure that residents were aware of how to dispose of the various types of refuse and, where appropriate, people could be put in touch with the Council’s Care and Repair service. It was stressed that only cosmetic work would be undertaken and nothing would be done at the rear of the properties concerned.

In response to questions, it was noted that, if the properties were cleared but then deteriorated again, Section 215 Notices could be issued, requiring the owner(s) of those properties to clear the rubbish.

AGREED:

that funding of £1,000 be approved from the Ward Action Plan Budget for the Briton Street Clean Up, this being a pilot project adopting a full street way of tackling environmental problems.

vi) Councillor Sarah Russell / Ride Leicester / Cycle Champions – Family Cycling Project

AGREED:

that funding of £1,000 be approved from the Ward Action Plan Budget for a Family Cycling Project to be run from the Manor House Neighbourhood Centre.

vii) Councillor Andy Connolly / Leicester City Council – Planting on Narborough Road North

Councillor Connolly explained that it was hoped to remove shrubs currently growing down the centre of Narborough Road and plant some bulbs there instead. Any funds remaining after those bulbs had been planted would be used to plant similar bulbs on the opposite side of the road.

Some people present questioned whether the bulbs would be seen by anyone other than motorists, but were assured that that part of Narborough Road was well used by pedestrians and cyclists.

AGREED:

that funding of £2,000 be approved from the Ward Action Plan Budget for the planting of daffodil and other perennial bulbs as indicated.

viii) Councillor Andy Connolly / Shaftesbury School (on behalf of residents on Ridley Street) – No Ball Games Signage

Councillor Connolly advised the meeting that problems were being encountered by residents in Ridley Street outside of school hours, when children were playing ball games against the wall of the school. It therefore was proposed to put up three “No Ball Games” signs.

Although the meeting recognised the problems that could be caused by ball games, some reservations were expressed about funding these signs. In order not to discourage children from playing games outside, it was suggested that an alternative location could be found at which ball games could be played, or soft balls could be provided.

It was noted that the school premises were not suitable for use outside of school hours, as the equipment provided there was designed for supervised use.

AGREED:

that this application be deferred to enable other options to be discussed with those concerned.

39. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Further to minute 28, (“Elected Mayor Consultation”), of the minutes of the Westcotes Community Meeting held on 30 November 2010, it was noted that De Montfort University was hosting an event called “Elected Mayor: The Big Debate”, on Monday, 18 April 2011.

Some places in the audience had been reserved for people from neighbourhoods and anyone interested in attending was invited to speak to the Ward Members at the end of the meeting.

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**Leicestershire
Neighbourhood Watch
Association**

Presentation to:
Westcotes Ward Meeting

8th March 2011

Leicestershire Neighbourhood Watch Association

**Our Neighbourhood
Our Watch**

Neighbourhood Watch is about local people working together to create safe and friendly places to live, places where crime is less likely to happen. It's about you looking out for your neighbours and them looking out for you.

Leicestershire Neighbourhood Watch Association

**Neighbourhood Watch in
Leicestershire.....**

- Exists to support all Neighbourhood Watch schemes across the county.
- We are a totally independent charity, which works with the Police and City Council.
- Membership of Neighbourhood Watch is totally FREE!!

Leicestershire Neighbourhood Watch Association

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
WATCH**

www.ourwatch.org.uk

Leicestershire Neighbourhood Watch Association

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
WATCH**

You're concerned about the safety of your street, your homes and the people who live there. You'd love to help stop crime and antisocial behaviour. But isn't this a job for the police?

Of course it is, but there's something you can do to help.

Your name Neighbourhood Watch

When communities are strong, criminals have a harder time and police have an easier one. When neighbours look out for each other, they're safer than when they just look out for themselves

OUR LOOKOUT



Leicestershire Neighbourhood Watch Association

What can you do today to help?

Register your details at

www.ourwatch.org.uk

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
WATCH**



Your name Neighbourhood Watch

ONE CLEAN LEICESTER



HOW IT WORKS

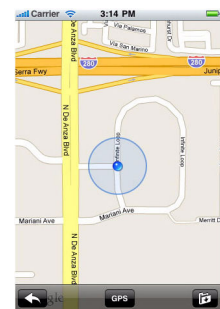
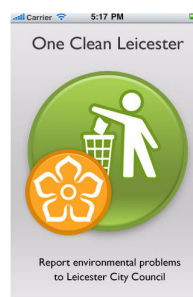
- DOWNLOADABLE APPS FROM IPHONE OR BLACKBERRY STORE
- EMAIL
- TEXT
- VIA COMPUTER

Use your smart phone

You can download our free application from the App Store/Android Market/ Blackberry AppWorld - just search for "One Clean Leicester"

If you have a council Blackberry with a camera - you can download the app from here:

<http://bit.ly/oclbb6>



TEXT or MMS

Send a Text or MMS message to 07725 20 20 20 with LEI (short for **Leicester**) in the Subject field or as the first part of the text in the message. Include a picture if you can, and give us a description of the report including the location. We'll get back to you if we need more information.

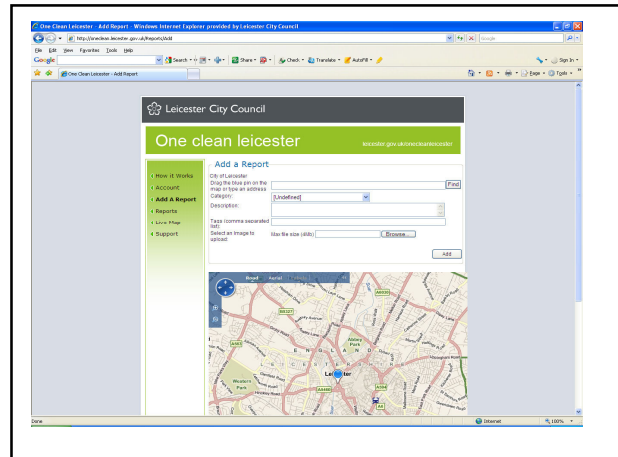
YOUR REPORT

- When you report a problem for the first time, you'll be sent an email confirming it has been received
- The photo is then checked by an administrator to approve it for the live website
- You will receive another email stating it has been approved and allocated
- You can now view your report on the website and monitor its status
- Once it has been completed you again will receive an email notifying you of this

Use the website.

Visit (<http://oneclean.leicester.gov.uk>) the website, sign in and add the details. Select a location on a map (or type it in), add a picture (if you have one), give us some details (such as a description) and upload.

You need to search for
CITY OF LEICESTER



ISSUES TO REPORT

- ABANDONED AND NUISANCE VEHICLES
- BINS ON STREET – COMMERCIAL
- BINS ON STREET- DOMESTIC
- COMMERCIAL WASTE/ RECYCLING
- DEAD ANIMALS
- DOG FOULING
- FLY POSTING
- FLY TIPPING
- GRAFFITI
- STREET CLEANSING – SWEEPING