

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 13 December 2010

Held at: Sparkenhoe Community Primary School, Sparkenhoe Street

Who was there:

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| Councillor Iqbal Desai |
| Councillor Parmjit Singh Gill |
| Councillor Hussein Suleman |

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.

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| Ward Councillors and General Information | Police Issues |
| Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries | Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries. |
| Organ Donation Campaign | City Warden |
| To receive information on the latest organ donor campaign. | Obtain information on the services available including the ‘One Clean Leicester’ and ‘Anti-graffiti’ programmes |
| Leicester Home Choice | Smoking Reduction |
| To receive information about the new way of finding out about Council housing. | Find out about the latest campaign around smoking reduction. |
| ‘One Pass’ | |
| Find out about entitlements available to concessionary bus-pass holders. | |

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.

33. CHAIR OF MEETING

Councillor Gill chaired the meeting.

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this time.

36. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Stoneygate Community Meeting held on 11th October 2010, as previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

37. MEDWAY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL - IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Rita and Cath, representing Medway Community Primary School attended the meeting to update the meeting on improvements at the school.

Cath stated that she was currently working part time at Medway and part time at Sparkenhoe. Some of the teaching staff at Medway were visiting Sparkenhoe to see how that school operated, and staff from Sparkenhoe were also visiting Medway. Cath stated that she aimed to change the current school curriculum so that it became more tailored to individual children's needs. A lot of work was required to improve facilities and funding streams were currently being sought. The school recognised the need to build links with the local community, particularly the Somali and Roma communities. Sports coaches were soon to be coming to Medway to coach children in sports leadership. Cath stated that the play areas outside the school required attention and much of the interior of the school needed re-painting.

Councillor Suleman stated that feedback from Children and Young People's Services would be helpful regarding the current state of the building and also to gather information on any plans for improvements. This was **agreed**.

38. NEW ARRIVALS STRATEGY GROUP

Sue Grogan, Chair, New Arrivals Strategy Group, Ellen Collier, Principal Education Welfare Officer and Bijal Stapleford, Education Welfare Officer attended the meeting to provide an insight to the work of the New Arrivals Strategy Group, and in particular the issues around the Roma community.

It was reported that a workshop event had been held in 2009 that had involved a number of agencies and local voluntary agencies and the outcomes of the event had identified the very complex needs of the Roma community.

Bijal stated that the various problems had been looked at closely and an attempt had been made to tackle these in a strategic way. A large number of Roma families resided in streets off Evington Park Road and Spinney Hills park area as well as the area around Gipsy Lane.

Bijal stated that the Roma people were eligible to be in this country but under European Union legislation passed in 2004 they are not eligible for housing, hence they are living in areas where there are high levels of privately let dwellings. A lot of the Roma adults were working for Employment Agencies and 'gang masters'. This leads to a number of problems with the claiming of benefits as they will be required to be in employment for 11 out of 12 months each year.

Bijal stated that, in conjunction with the Police, funding was being sought to provide basic ESOL language training for the Roma community. Further work was underway to try and get the Roma community into using local Community facilities but this was an area of work that was taking longer than anticipated following the outcome of Health and Safety checks.

Ellen Collier stated that she was tackling the issue of getting Roma children into school. Each school had it's own Education Welfare Officer and, in conjunction with local Police, patrols were undertaken in term time to speak to children found that were of school age. If these children were not on a school roll then work was being undertaken to get them put on. Members of the public were being urged to contact Education Welfare should they regularly see children on the streets. Education Welfare also had legal powers to issue notices to parents who persistently allow children to be absent from school. The aim was to make all parents aware of their responsibilities. It was stated that whilst the reasons were clear it would not be acceptable to see any of these parents going to court when the underlying reasons were known.

Bijal stated that revisions to the current Entry Pack were being made to encompass different languages, this had arisen from the New Arrivals Strategy Group.

A member of the public stated that he was aware that Roma children in the Evington Road area had experienced difficulties in getting school places and then had been sent to Babington Community College, but had not been offered assistance with bus fares. Bijal stated that a lot of Roma children were choosing Babington as a school because they had friends that went there. To qualify for free bus travel the respective families had to be in receipt of Family Tax Credits, Roma families were not eligible for Family Tax Credits. Education Welfare would be able however to work with schools, families and pupils to try and address the transport needs to/from school.

In concluding it was stated that it was apparent that there were a number of issues around the Roma community that needed to be discussed in greater detail and that as part of the bigger picture certain discretion was needed. A further issue raised

was that of the Roma community being able to access Doctor's surgeries, this was proving difficult at the moment. Feedback was sought on these issues.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the information be noted and that feedback on the issues raised around the offering of discretions and of access to Doctor's surgeries be sought.
- ii) that further discussion around the Roma community be scheduled for a future meeting.

39. LOCAL POLICING UPDATE

P.C. Dave Barber circulated a report that updated the Community meeting on local policing activities. The report is summarised as follows: -

- No changes to local policing team
- All crime down 24.6% overall, compared to same 3 months in 2009
- New Beat priorities set
- ASB and Criminal Damage – Myrtle Road
- ASB and Drugs – Upper Tichbourne Street
- Evington Footpath area – Street Robberies
- Damaged cars on St. James Road

EDL Demonstration

P.c. Barber stated that this had been a static demonstration, centred on Humberstone Gate West, and had been the biggest Police operation in Leicester for 25 years. Since the EDL demonstration in Leicester several more had been held in various other cities across the country. The following statistics were provided: -

- 17 people arrested
- 13 Police Forces involved
- 18 Police Horses
- 18 Police Dogs
- Cost of some £131k to City Council, approx £1m to Police.

Following discussion it was stated that local Councillors had not been consulted adequately although it was stated that the Police had fully consulted with the Muslim community. Concerns were also expressed as to the amount of disruption caused by the demonstration to residents of the City who wanted to use the facilities within the City Centre at the time of the demonstration.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

40. CITY WARDENS UPDATE

The local City Warden attended the meeting and stated that he had undertaken a number of patrols of the area. Fines would be imposed for dropping cigarette ends, chewing gum, tissues etc. The fine was set by Government at £80.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

41. BUDGET

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, introduced the funding applications received since the last meeting and members gave them consideration: -

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| a) | <u>Memon Community Association</u> | £ 1358 |
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Application shared across 4 wards (Spinney Hills, Charnwood, Coleman and Stoneygate - £5430 in total) to hold an Annual Sports Tournament centred at the Memon Community Centre, Uppingham Road, in April 2011 and targeted at youth in the area. The event was spread over 4 weeks and the funding would be utilised to hire various other venues.

RESOLVED:

that the application for **£1358** be **Supported**.

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| b) | <u>Active Youth</u> | 333 |
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Application shared across 3 Wards (Spinney Hills, Stoneygate and Coleman) to stage an 'Enjoy, Celebrate and Learn' event at Highfields Centre on 21st December, aimed at bringing young people together from all backgrounds and cultures to learn, enjoy and celebrate.

It was reported that the 2 other Community Meetings had yet to consider the application. No representative of the applicant was present at the meeting. It was further stated that there was no mention of including the Roma Community in the event and the event was to take place the following week.

RESOLVED:

that a sum of **£333** be 'ring fenced' pending a satisfactory response from the applicants regarding the issues raised.

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| c) | <u>Leicester Interfaith Youth Club</u> | |
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Steve reported that an application for **£580** had been considered at the last meeting and the Community Meeting had agreed to 'ring fence' **£300**, pending the outcome of further enquiries of the applicant.

Steve stated that the work outlined by the Youth Club to clear Evington Brook had been assessed and identified as being extremely hazardous for the volunteers from the Youth Club to undertake. The watercourse was actually owned by the Environment Agency and it had been subsequently agreed that

the Environment Agency should be approached to undertake the necessary work.

RESOLVED:

that the Environment Agency be approached to undertake the necessary works to clear Evington Brook.

42. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business.

43. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

