

Eyres Monsell Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

10:30 am, Wednesday, 11 January 2012

**Held at: The Glen Pub
Hillsborough Road, Leicester**

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Virginia Cleaver

Councillor Rory Palmer

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
Housing Office Team	Smoking Advice and Information
Council Advice and Information	One Clean Leicester

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.

25. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Palmer was elected Chair for the meeting.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Joan Garrity, Jean Dutfield and Dee Dixon.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Eyres Monsell Community Meeting, held on 6th September 2011, were confirmed as a correct record.

29. PENSION AND BENEFIT CHANGES

Councillors agreed to hear agenda items out of order and heard the following item next.

Darren Moore, from Welfare Rights Service gave details on proposed changes to welfare benefits.

Welfare Rights Service, Leicester City Council helped Leicester residents claim £6 million in additional benefits and tax credits in 2011. The government aims to cut benefits by approximately £16-17 billion, per annum and will be changing the way increases in benefit are calculated, ceasing to use the Retail Price Index (RPI) and using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This will reduce the amount of increase in benefits for claimants over the years, and will affect all benefits. Welfare Rights Service can also help people who have been turned down for benefit and want to appeal. The government are looking at abolishing legal aid for a lot of areas from 2013, for example welfare benefits law, and there will be fewer agencies to give advice.

Welfare Advice Service also undertook benefit checks for people with Home Care service, to ensure they were receiving all possible help available to them.

The government introduced a phased increase in retirement age for men and women, who would now retire at age 66 in 2020, age 67 in 2026 and age 68 in 2034. The figures above may change as there was currently a Welfare Reform Bill going through Parliament. Also people of working age in receipt of benefits would face a tougher testing for eligibility. It was reported that many people on Incapacity Benefit being reassessed, now known as Employment Support Allowance from 2008 (ESA), had been visiting Welfare Advice claiming they had been assessed unfairly and had been refused ESA. It was noted that there was a process of appeal. Another change to the benefits system from 2013 would be the replacement of the Disability Living

Allowance with Personal Independence Payment for eligible working age people aged 16 to 64. This benefit would face a different test and some people might not meet the criteria, estimated to be half a million people.

Also, in order to simplify the benefit system a Universal Credit was set to replace the present benefit structure in 2013. There would be initial confusion as the two systems would run concurrently for a period of time. There would also be a new Enterprise Allowance created to assist unemployed people set up in business themselves.

The government would be tightening up on the number of people in work on low income claiming tax credits. Couples would now have to work 24 hours per week to qualify (previously 16 hours), and the backdating of claims would be reduced to one month. The change would also mean people would not receive extra tax credit if their income fell.

Jane Gallagher, Liaison Officer with Revenues and Benefits gave information on housing benefit and council tax changes.

It was stated that from April 2011 there were changes to housing benefits as part of the Welfare Reform Bill, which affected mainly private tenants claiming Local Housing Allowance (LHA). LHA is Housing Benefit (HB) paid to assist people unable to afford rent in the private rented sector, (Local Housing Allowance was a national scheme introduced in April 2008 for all new HB claims from people renting from a private landlord). The allowance is based on the size of the household. Some of the Welfare Reform changes affected LHA rates: the maximum LHA rate is now a four bedroom rate from April 2011 (previously five bedroom rate pre April 2011). Pre April 2011 LHA rates were set at the 50th percentile (lowest half of market rents charged in Leicester. From April 2011 the rates are set at the lowest 3rd of market rents, or 30th percentile. This means the LHA rates reduced from April 2011.

A more recent change took effect from 1st January 2012. The 'shared accommodation' LHA rate is now the maximum bedroom rate that can be paid to a single person under the age of 35 years. The rate is paid even if a single person was living in a self-contained property. Before changes to the benefits, a restriction applied to single people under the age of 25 years.

From April 2011 where a disabled claimant requires overnight care provided by a non-resident carer, an extra bedroom for the non-resident carer is allowed, and could increase the amount of benefit received for some claimants, though they must meet certain criteria for example.

Leicester City Council hold a budget to make Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs), to provide financial assistance for people who need help with their housing costs. Each case is decided on its own merits, though DHPs are made in single or periodic payments.

The meeting was also informed that from April 2013 there is a proposed introduction of size criteria in the social rented sector of housing. Homes that were larger than the

Government said were needed may lose part of their housing benefit. Examples of homes that could be affected were:

- A single person or couple living in a two bedroomed home;
- A family with two same-sex children living in a three bedroomed home;
- A family with a boy and girl aged ten living in a three bedroom home.

The Government proposes that no account would be taken of extra room needed for a foster child, or parents with a disabled child who required their own bedroom. Changes would also affect separated couples who wanted children to stay.

For one bedroom over quota, there is a proposed 14% reduction, rising to 25% reduction in housing benefit for two or more bedrooms over quota. It was stated an average of £13 per week would be lost per family, and approximately 67,000 families nationally would be affected.

From October 2013 new HB claims would receive the housing element of the Universal Credit, rather than it being paid directly to the landlord, and by October 2012 it is proposed that HB would no longer be administered by local authorities, but will be paid as part of Universal Credit. It was believed pensioners and vulnerable people might be exempt from direct HB payments. Tenants would be responsible for ensuring their rent was paid.

The meeting was informed that contact details for Welfare Rights Service and Revenues and Benefits advice agencies in Leicester are attached to the minutes for information.

Members stated that changes to welfare benefits were complex, and that it was difficult for Leicester City Council to plan ahead as information was changing very quickly. It was also stated it was a frightening situation for people, and it was estimated that approximately 7,000 people in the city would receive less benefit. The need to set up clinics around the city to advise residents of the changes to benefits, which at present applied to working age people, was suggested by members.

30. COUNCILLORS' COMMUNITY REPORT

Councillor Cleaver informed the meeting about victim support drop-in sessions which took place on the second Thursday of each month at the community centre. Described as being warm and friendly, the sessions were an opportunity for residents, officers and the police to get together to discuss issues in the area. Also available during the sessions were complimentary therapy treatments for people suffering from stress as a result of being a victim of crime, and positive affirmation sessions to help build people's confidence. The sessions were an opportunity to support people, but if people had been victim to more serious crime, they were dealt with in confidence and referred to the necessary supporting agencies.

Councillor Cleaver informed the meeting that a friendship group had been set up at Rupert House, which was sheltered accommodation for the elderly. Councillor Cleaver stated the friendship group had successfully applied for community meeting funding to host a Christmas party. Councillor Cleaver received a phone call from the

Treasurer for the group, who stated there was a 'buzz' around Rupert House, and that residents were pleased the community had taken the time to be involved.

The meeting were informed that some members of the Forum for Older People (FOP) and Councillor Cleaver had visited the sensory garden at Leicester General Hospital. It was stated people were unhappy over news the garden was to be moved, but fears were dispelled after a meeting with the NHS, and there were also plans to create a garden at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Councillor Cleaver stated that Catch 22 were successful in a bid for funding for a project for which the Community Association will oversee. The project will support young people aged 8-19 years, and will work with the police to tackle anti-social behaviour. Top youth workers would be addressing hot spots in the area by giving the young people positive things to do, and provide training to help the young people stay out of trouble.

Councillor Cleaver also thanked the Events Committee who worked throughout the year fund raising and putting on events. She reported the craft fair was a huge success, and hoped that the coffee morning event which hosted the Emmanuel Gospel Choir would become an annual event.

Councillor Cleaver informed the meeting that many people in Eyres Monsell required carers, and that there were many courses starting soon. Details of the courses could be found on leaflets in the community centre, and there would be 'taster' sessions for people to try out the courses.

Councillor reported that car parking in the area continued to be a problem, and that residents might want to consider allocating some of the community meeting budget to tackle the problem.

The meeting was informed that surgeries continued to be busy, and community work continued to be carried out by councillors. Councillor Cleaver asked that if any residents knew of or were worried about the forthcoming benefit changes, then they should contact Welfare Services at Leicester City Council for advice.

Councillor Palmer reported that the Invincible / Exchange project had stalled, with ownership of the site changing hands again. Councillor Palmer had met with the developer, who appeared to be more serious about the development than previous site owners. A notice had been placed in the Leicester Mercury to close access to the road at the back of the Exchange. Development would then take place after legal processes were complete and an official notice was placed in the community centre. The planning documents should have been accessible to the public on 29th December 2012, with a 28 day consultation period. Unfortunately due to the closure of the office during the New Year holiday period, the documents were not accessible until 3rd January 2012. The new development would include shops and parking, and Councillor Palmer was looking at plans for highways. Development of the site was a Council commitment and money had been set aside in the budget. Councillor Palmer indicated that pressure would be kept on the new developers, and if residents had any concerns regarding the development then these would be passed on. A resident stated that when the Caversham Road flats were built, developers omitted to build

two shops which were on the original plans, and that this would be repeated with the Invincible development. Councillor Palmer stated that appropriate action would be taken against developers as there would be an audit trail, but also stated he was confident that pattern would not be repeated.

Councillor Palmer reported that people were worried about the future of young people and schools. He suggested that concerns for young people's futures should be tackled as young as five, six and seven, to ensure they had the best possible education, as the economic recession was predicted to last a number of years. He suggested the community worked with schools and young people to engage them in the work of the community. Councillor Palmer reported that Eyres Monsell Primary School was showing strong, positive signs of improvement, and that teachers were doing a brilliant job in difficult times. A resident informed the meeting that the breakfast club at the school was very successful and that there had been an increase in education standards. The resident went on to state that young people were a victim of another system, whereby universities welcomed overseas students, who were then educated and returned home with their qualifications. Councillor Palmer stated that people needed to ensure the current and the next generations of children succeed, but it was a fact that overseas students paid their bills, and that universities had no choice but to increase tuition fees as the government had removed universities' funding.

A resident asked why the Council wasted money on young offenders in the form of taxis, horse riding, theme park visits and mentors? Councillor Palmer stated it was not sensible to write someone off at 10 years of age, and that intervention and encouragement was used to direct children and help them focus on their future. He went on to say this would save money, and from a taxpayers point of view cost less than locking people up.

A resident on Monmouth Drive informed Councillors that one house had covered a grass verge with stone. Councillors stated they would speak with Councillor Russell and the city warden for the area.

31. RAISED FLOWER BEDS CONSULTATION FOR BUNGALOW AREAS

Ben Stevens, Community Engagement Officer, informed the meeting that the City Council would undertake consultation on proposed improvement in areas around bungalows by building raised flower beds. Further information would be reported to a future community meeting.

32. POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Andy Partridge was present and reported the following:

- Wokingham Avenue as a priority area for anti-social behaviour had quietened down, and the priority area was closed on 10th January 2012.
- There were no other priority areas for Eyres Monsell, and crime and anti-social behaviour levels were low and the area quiet.
- When young people were involved in crime, diversionary projects were often seen as a reward, but projects did work, though they were not suitable for all

young people. He stated that one 13-14 year old in the area was institutionalised already, and that locking up was not the answer.

- In the short-term there would be no change to the neighbourhood policing team, though this might change after the Olympics when a review would be undertaken. There would be no change to the service, and the team might increase in size.
- In response to a question from a resident, there was a question mark over the future of PCSOs funding after 2013. Councillor Palmer suggested the question over the future of PCSOs be raised with the Police Commissioner after the election in November 2012.
- A resident informed the meeting that the BBC aired a programme on how the police in Leicester were leading the way in their use of technology.

A leaflet was also distributed at the meeting with information on Neighbourhood Link, the Police Community messaging system. A copy of the leaflet is attached to the minutes for information.

33. CITY WARDEN UPDATE

Scott Clarke, City Warden, informed the meeting he had taken over from Matt Copley, and that his area now covered Freeman Ward. He notified the meeting that numbers of city wardens would be reduced in April 2012, from 20 down to 12. Scott stated there would no longer be a dedicated warden for each area, and that wardens would be more reliant on issues being reported.

Scott reported that vehicles for sale had become a parking nuisance in the area, with four locations being particularly problematic. He informed the meeting that £100 fine enforcement action had been taken regarding car issues, which could occur two to three times per week in Eyres Monsell ward.

A resident reported that dog fouling was on the increase in the area, and after going through proper reporting procedures no action had been taken. The resident stated that he had been told by one officer to ask the dog-walker for details, but the resident stated they would not want to get into any confrontations. Scott stated that early morning and late night patrols were carried out, but wardens relied on residents to report incidents, and that residents should not confront dog owners. Dog fouling received an £80 fixed penalty notice (FPN), and Scott had distributed 195 FPNs over a twelve-month period, predominantly for littering. Scott informed the meeting that FIDO (Faeces Intake Disposal Operational machine) was used city-wide by Cleansing Services.

A resident who reported fly-tipping on Whitley Drive garages was informed that it could be reported online or by telephone to the Council to have it removed. Scott stated that in order to prosecute offenders, evidence was needed.

A resident at the meeting complimented road sweepers on Packhorse Drive for their good work.

34. COUNCIL BUDGET

Councillor Palmer gave a briefing on the draft proposals for 2012/13 to 2015/16.

He informed the meeting that a link to the budget consultation could be found on Leicester City Council's website. He stated that it was the most challenging budget Leicester City Council has had to set. He explained to the meeting what the General Fund Revenue Budget was and how most of the money was received from the government in the form of grant, on which Leicester City Council was heavily dependent. This was the funding the government was cutting.

In 2011/12 the grant was cut by 30% (£30 million), 2013/14 (£20 million), 2014/15 (£20 million). The cuts were front loaded and this had given Leicester City Council less time to adapt.

Leicester City Council was maximising efficiency savings across the Council, trying to increase income, targeting services at need, i.e. children's centres would be kept open, but there would be less specialist work in the centres. This would protect key services for vulnerable people. He informed the meeting that money was also being protected around economic development. It was not proposed to close museums, sports centres, or community centres. However, Leicester City Council would be looking at the reduction of 600 full-time jobs.

Also it was stated that the plan was not to reduce library facilities, but to move them, for example, Aylestone Library could move into Aylestone Leisure Centre.

A budget summary was given and Cllr. Palmer stated there was still work to do to meet the budget gap in 2014/15. Also he stated that the government was talking of further cash cuts.

There would be an increase of spend on repairing pot holes/ road repairs. It was believed that if the repairs were not carried out the problems would get worse.

Councillor Palmer explained that it was proposed to increase Council Tax by 3.5% in 2013/14 and 2% in 2014/15. To increase Council Tax any higher than this would involve the costs of holding a referendum.

Members of the community were reminded that there would be a consultation on the budget proposals in The Link magazine, the Leicester Mercury and on Leicester City Council's website.

A resident asked if there would be a consultation on the salaries for the City Mayor and Deputy City Mayor, and that it would create good feeling if they were to take a pay freeze. Councillor Palmer responded that no decision had been made on the salaries, and that council officers were looking at options for an independent panel. By law every four years an independent panel had to set Members' allowances.

35. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Application 1

Goldhill Play Association – football support, £300

For the hire of St Margaret's Pastures MUGA. 10 sessions to include transport, certificates and pitch hire. To promote football to under-11s through coaching and a mini-tournament.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £300.00.

Application 2

Children's Hospital School – gardening project, £500

To purchase a shed/summer house for the allotment area that had been developed over the last 18 months.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £500.00.

Application 3

Pink Lizard – supporting our artistic youth, £1,752

This application was deferred. Members asked that further information be brought to a future meeting.

Application 4

Monzell Mail – provision of new software, £500

To improve the efficiency of production by installing new software on Community Centre PCs.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £500.00.

Application 5

Eyres Monzell Primary School PSA – Spring fete, £1,500

To provide entertainment facilities for the Spring fete at the school.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported to the value of £1,500.00.

Matters Approved Under the Fast Track Procedure

The following budget requests were included on the agenda for formally noting as it had been agreed by Councillors in-between meetings to enable the project to take place.

1. Catch 22 – Gymnastic Project - £250 (also supported by Freement Community Meeting)

RESOLVED:

that the previously agreed funding be noted.

2. Saffron Support for the Elderly – Christmas Celebrations - £250

RESOLVED:

that the previously agreed funding be noted.

3. Rupert House Friendship Group Christmas party and group set-up - £500

RESOLVED:

that the previously agreed funding be noted.

36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Councillor Palmer thanked Ben Stevens on behalf of the meeting and community for all his effort and hard work over the last year with projects and the community, and wished him luck in his new employment.
2. Gary Bucher informed the meeting about FAB weight management service, which took place in Eyres Monsell, Saffron and Freeman wards. The nutrition and exercise course was for six weeks in duration and cost £10. Groups could also request the course be held at other venues, and costs could be negotiated, but there would be a charge for administration and publicity. Details on the course could be found at the community centre.

37. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 12.41pm.

Sure Start Centres:

**Referrals / appointments:
0116 256 8217 / 8233**

Benefit check / form filling for families with children under 5yrs old

Beaumont Leys

20 Home Farm Walk
LE4 0RW

Highfields

20 Barnards Close
LE2 0UZ

Bewcastle/Mowacre

Bewcastle Grove
Mowmacre Hill
LE4 2JY

Avebury Meadows

65 Avebury Avenue
LE4 0HD

Rowlatts Hill

Balderstone Close
LE5 4ES

North Evington

315 Gwendolen Road
LE5 5FS

Eyres Monsell

Hillsborough Road
LE2 9PT

Rowley Fields

Imperial Avenue
LE3 1AH

Braunstone Frith

Cuffling Drive
LE3 6NN

Mayfield

Mayfield Road
LE2 1LR

Call direct - 0116 294 6120

Northfields

343 Gipsy Lane
LE4 9DD

Call direct - 2924580

Woodbridge

54A Woodbridge Road
LE4 7RG

Call direct - 0116 221 1760

St Matthews - Sure Start

34 Vancouver Road
LE1 2GA

Call direct - 0116 242 6370

Highfields Centre

**96 Melbourne Road,
Leicester LE2 0DS.**

0116 253 1053

Monday - Friday, 9 - 5pm

General advice & consumer queries.

Drop-in Sessions

Monday, 9:30am - 12 noon
Tuesday, 9:30am - 12:30pm
Wednesday, 4:30 - 8:00pm
Thursday, 9:30am - 12:30pm

Appointments

Monday, 12:30 - 3:30pm
Wednesday, 12:30 - 3:30pm
Friday, 9:00 - 12 noon

Mosaic

**2 Oak Spinney Park
Ratby Lane, Leicester
LE3 3AW**

Advice to people with disabilities, including welfare benefits & assistance with form filling. Home visits available.

0116 231 8720

Monday - Thursday, 9 - 5pm
Friday, 9 - 4:30pm

Saffron Resource Centre

**432 Saffron Lane,
Leicester LE2 6SB**

Benefits, housing, education, employment & debt. Appointment only. Home visits by special arrangement.

0116 283 7212 / 1765

Monday - Friday, 9 - 5pm

Citizens's Advice

**3rd Floor Alliance House,
6 Bishop Street**

Advice of Welfare Benefits, Debt, Consumer Matters and employment.

0116 285 2801

Phone line open :-
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday,
10:00am - 1pm

Appointments will be made after initial phone call. No drop in service available. Lines can be very busy, please be patient.

Housing Options Centre

**Phoenix House, 1 King Street
Leicester LE1 6RN
(Welford Place)**

Housing register, Homes mobility & Homeswap Schemes. Nominations Section & adapted Housing Database Office.

Advice Line

0116 252 8707

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday,
9am - 5:00pm
Tuesday, 1pm - 5pm
Friday, 9am - 4:30pm

**Public Hours
(Welford Place)**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday &
Friday, 9am - 4pm
Tuesday, 1pm - 4pm

Emergency out of hours

**Border House
Family:**

0116 221 1407

Dawn Centre

Single/Childless couples:

0116 221 2770

Age UK

Clarence House, Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 3PJ

Advice for older people (over 50yrs) on a wide range of subjects including welfare benefits, assistance with form filling.

0116 222 0555

Monday - Thursday, 1:30 - 4:30pm
Friday, 1:30 - 4:00pm

Advice by Appointment only.

Community Legal Advice Centre
(CLAC)

60 Charles Street, 3rd Floor
Leicester LE1 1FB

General & Specialist advice in Welfare benefits, Housing, Community Care, Debt, Family, Employment

0116 242 6720

Drop in Sessions

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri,
9:00am – 4:30pm
Wed, 9:00am - 2pm

CALS

(Community Advice and Law Service)

1st Floor, Epic House, Charles St
Leicester LE1 3SH

0116 242 1120

Monday - Thursday, 9am - 5pm
Friday, 9am - 4:30pm

Appointments available to those with complex debt problems after initial telephone advice.

Shelter Housing Aid and Research Project

13 Welford Road, Leicester
LE2 7AD

0116 254 6064

Emergency Drop-In and Advice Service:

(Best to call first to make an appointment)

Monday - Thursday, 10am - 4pm
Friday, 10am - 3:30pm

Immigration Advisory Service

Derby office working out of -
9 Millstone Lane
Leicester LE1 5JN

0116 262 9899

Monday - Fri, 9am - 5pm

Immigration/Asylum - free and confidential advice to all who are eligible, we can also conduct appeals on your behalf to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal.

TREC

(The Race Equality Centre – New Arrival Service)

3rd Floor Epic House
Lower Hill Street
Leicester LE1 3SH
(off Charles Street)

0116 299 9807 / 9800

Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm

Advice and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in respect of benefits entitlements and applications.

Consumer Direct

Advice on consumer matters.

08454 040506

Mondays - Friday 9am - 5pm

**LEICESTER
ADVICE
AGENCIES**

Welfare Rights Service

Leicester City Council,
1 Grey Friars LE1 5PH

Benefits Advice Line

General benefits advice, help with appeals.

0116 256 8211

Mon, Tues, Thu, 1 - 4pm

Benefit check / form filling:-

St Peters Health Centre / Framland House

(Residents of Highfields / Spinney Hills only)

Contact 256 8217/8233

New Parks Customer Services Centre

321 Aikman Avenue

Contact 252 7000

(Appointments Fri only)

continued ...

Neighbourhood Link

Police Community Messaging System



To receive the latest news, updates and events information direct from the police go to:

www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk

SIGN UP 

Neighbourhood Link

Police Community Messaging System

By signing up to Neighbourhood Link you can:

- Find out about policing issues in your community
- Receive messages at times to suit you
- Get the latest crime reduction and community safety advice
- Respond directly to your Neighbourhood Policing Team

- Feed back on the information you receive, giving a starred rating
- Unsubscribe at any time if the system is not for you

Remember – Neighbourhood Link is:

- A confidential and secure service where your details are never shared without your consent
- FREE to register and receive information

JOIN TODAY

www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk



Leicestershire Constabulary

Powered by Neighbourhood Alert



This page is left blank intentionally.