

Freemen Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

**2:00 pm, Wednesday, 7 December 2011
Held at: Linwood Centre, Linwood Lane**

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Elly Cutkelvin

Councillor Bill Shelton

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
Orange Bags Recycling Scheme	City Warden

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.

24. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Shelton took the Chair for the meeting.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr Warrington.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them. No declarations were made.

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Scott Clarke, City Warden, asked for an amendment to minute 19, City Warden: reference to Hazelden Drive should be changed to Hughenden Drive.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

28. COUNCILLORS' COMMUNITY REPORT

Councillor Cutkelvin gave an update on work the ward councillors had been involved in within the ward, in addition to casework and meetings with officers.

Football pitches

Discussions had taken place with Mark Laywood regarding the new football pitches, as members of the community felt that they were not able to get access to them. A flexible pricing arrangement had been set up for local organisations if it would bring benefit to the community. Interested parties were urged to contact the site manager.

Tic Toc Park

A suggestion had been made that a users' group be set up. Approximately 30 people had expressed an interest. A presentation on new play equipment was to be given later in the meeting.

Solar panels scheme

Many solar panels had been installed on properties in the vicinity of Linwood Lane in conjunction with EON. Residents were generally pleased with them and some minor issues with roof damage were rectified quickly.

Funding for environmental improvements

The Housing Department had a pot of funds to make improvements in the area. Projects were identified from feedback from residents.

Kingfisher Christmas event

An interfaith event had been arranged by Dave Budd, who was thanked for his work. Funding had been made available from several sources and it would be a free event with various attractions. It was aimed at residents around Neston Gardens, but anyone was able to attend. It had been arranged in response to a racial abuse case earlier in the year and in response to negative publicity on the Panorama programme. Its aim was to celebrate the area's community spirit. It would also enable people to feel a sense of ownership of the centre following its refurbishment.

Residents were given the opportunity to ask questions. A resident asked what was being done to tackle arson on the wasteland at the back of the Kingfisher Centre near Burnside Road. Councillor Shelton stated that this was being looked at and suggested it could be addressed through the environmental improvements funding. A resident asked what was being done about the large number of empty houses. Stacie Lovell, Housing Officer, stated that homes were empty slightly longer due to the recently introduced choice based lettings scheme where people bid for homes. A resident stated that the houses around him had solar panels installed but he didn't know about the scheme. He was informed that the scheme had been targeted mainly through council housing stock. Other opportunities were available for owner occupiers, but were warned that if they had them installed, it meant that the energy company owned part of the roof for 20 years, so was not a decision to be taken lightly.

29. NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT ON ELSTON FIELDS (TIC TOC PARK)

Adrian Edge, Play and Youth Development Manager, informed the meeting of the result of consultation with local schools as to which piece of play equipment would be installed on Tic Toc Park, following the removal of the old zip wire. One type had been chosen overwhelmingly and it was hoped that it would be installed mind January. The apparatus would be robust steel. The funding was available because there had been much less damage caused by bonfires this year. He reported that there may also be some future funding to install 5 a side football goal posts. He hoped that this was the start of a marked improvement after a period of being overlooked.

30. FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AND EON FUNDING FOR SOLAR PANELS

Stacie Lovell, Housing Officer, explained a project, run in conjunction with EON to install solar panels on council homes. It was stated that solar panels would benefit tenants, made costs clearer and improve standard of living.

Stacie also informed the meeting of other improvements in the area, including the vicinity of flats on Heathcote Road, play equipment for small children at Neston Gardens and improvements to flats on Neston Gardens. She asked residents to

suggest other areas where improvements were needed. She was reminded of the issue of wasteland at the back of Burnside Road. It was mentioned that the problem with this site was identifying who owned the land and there were a couple of issues to address before it could be cleared. Scott Clarke, City Warden, stated that he had made numerous efforts to address it, and had reached a dead end in resolving it. A resident suggested that the Council could look at compulsorily selling it.

31. POLICE UPDATE

Police Sergeant Darren Little gave an update on policing issues in the ward. He stated that incidents of each crime type had all reduced, apart from arson, as there had been one more fire. The team were working hard to maintain this standard. There were currently no priorities, for the first time. The priority for Stanton Row had been closed and areas that were being monitored, i.e., Welford Road/Millgate Lodge and mini motos on Tic Toc park and the Mud Dumps had been addressed. If people identified significant issues, they could be added as a priority.

Residents asked for more information about a suspected bomb that had been reported in the Leicester Mercury. Darren stated that this had turned out to be an old empty shell and had been no danger.

In response to a question about comparison with national performance, he stated that Leicestershire Police had been named in the top ten authorities in the country for reducing crime.

32. CITY WARDEN UPDATE

Scott Clarke, City Warden gave an update on his work in the ward. He circulated a chart outlining the targets for the next six months. He drew attention to work done to address cars being sold on streets causing a parking nuisance. Legal notices had been issued for several vehicles and the cars had now gone. He also reported on the bins on streets initiative on Wordsworth Road and Welford Road. This had gone well and bins had been moved prior to legal notices being served. He asked residents to keep him informed of issues.

Councillor Cutlekin asked if patch walks still took place. Scott stated that there had been a lack of interest and had not happened for some time. Stacie Lovell stated that she would let councillors and Scott know of any housing patch walks that were arranged.

A resident asked what options were available to deal with messy gardens at the front and back of homes. Scott said that he visited these properties and advised on the facilities available such as bulk collection. If people were unresponsive to this, action could be taken through the housing office or via legal notice. It was noted that Housing only carried out the work when the tenant was unable to themselves. A resident asked if the powers extended to overgrown gardens. Scott advised residents to inform him of specific gardens and he would look at what could be done.

A resident highlighted a problem with dog fouling on their garden and street, which occurred early morning or late evening. Scott had monitored it at these times but had not caught anyone.

33. ORANGE BAGS RECYCLING SCHEME

Officers from the recycling team gave an update on the orange bag recycling scheme. They also explained that people who had a Monday or Tuesday bin collection would not have a collection on 26th and 27th December. Extra sacks could be left out the week after. People were reminded of the large variety of items that could now be recycled which would reduce the amount going into bins.

In response to residents' comments and questions, they stated that it was best to mix heavy and light items to avoid bags being blown away. Cardboard could be left underneath bags to save space in them. If bags had been ripped and the contents blown into the street, this could be reported to Cleansing Services who would clear it up quickly. Residents were thanked for their efforts to recycle, and the results had been very impressive. Work was now starting on making arrangements for flats for which the normal arrangements would not work.

34. AYLESTONE RECREATIONAL GROUND FOOTBALL PITCHES

Mark Laywood, Sports Project Manager, informed the meeting of the facilities available at the new recreation ground football pitches. He explained that the pitches were available at different times of the day. The majority of day time slots were used by schools, but others could use them when free. A database of users was being drawn up and work was being done with the police and the community to identify funding for groups to use them in the 4-6pm slot. The evenings were mainly for commercial bookings. There was plenty of capacity at weekends.

Fees and charges were set by councillors, but there was an element of flexibility for local community groups. Bookings for the astroturf and the pavilion were made through the manager of Aylestone Leisure Centre, other bookings through "sports on parks." There was a big club room and kitchen in the pavilion. Community groups were encouraged to use this as much as possible. There was no bar, but users could apply for a temporary licence. The next Community Meeting was to be held there. One-off or block bookings could be made of any of the facilities. Currently the grass pitches were not available, as time was required to allow the grass to establish itself. Affiliated bookings were therefore not available this season.

Councillors encouraged local people to use the facilities as much as possible. Residents approved of the new facilities, stating that they were long overdue. They welcomed the new pavilion facilities.

35. BUDGET

Councillors noted applications that had been approved between meetings as follows:

Catch 22 Gymnastic sessions £250

This was provisionally agreed at the last meeting subject to confirmation of the amounts required.

Empress Roller Skating - £170

To fund the kit for a member who was attending a European championship. It is to be noted that this and a previous application will not set a precedent for approval of any other applications to the club's members.

Kingfisher Youth Centre interfaith event, Saffron Neighbourhood Management Board - £500

To provide funding for a community Christmas event at the Kingfisher Youth Centre.

Southfields Drive Community Association Christmas celebrations £250

To put on a Christmas event for elderly and vulnerable people.

Operation Santa – Goldhill Adventure Playground, £300

This application was to provide traditional Christmas parties and a Santa visit for children.

Community Meeting leaflets - £500

To raise the profile of the meetings by delivering leaflets to homes in the vicinity of venues for the rest of the municipal year.

Saff Mag – Saffron Arts Forum - £500

To contribute to the running costs for one year. Saff Mag will publicise the work of the councillors, their surgeries and community meetings.

Saffron Housing Office Christmas events for the elderly - £200.

Barber shop quartet and carol evening.

Members also considered applications that had been submitted as follows:

Application 1:

Supporting our Artistic Youth, Pink Lizard - £1752 (with £1752 also requested from Eyres Monsell.)

Adrian Hinds, the applicant, described the project to the meeting. He said that the project had been running for two years and let young people develop a variety of dance and musical skills.

The Chair asked for information about other sources of funding that were being sought, as the application had been deferred at the last meeting to await the outcome of an Arts Council bid. Adrian responded that bids were being submitted to various sources, the outcomes of some were due shortly.

A resident endorsed the work done through the project, stating that it was supportive and professional.

The Chair recommended deferral as the funding sought from other sources was far in excess of what could be provided through the community meeting, and if one was successful, the community meeting money could have been spent elsewhere. If the applications were unsuccessful, the application could be reconsidered. Adrian was advised that, if the interim funding ran out before any bids were approved, he could submit another interim fast track bid for up to £500. However, it was stressed that if any bid were to be approved, it would have to be with the support of Eyres Monsell Councillors too. Adrian was wished every success in the mean time.

AGREED: that the application be deferred for the reasons stated above.

Application 2:

Domestic Violence Toolbox, Police & Community Safety - £500

Police Sergeant Darren Little explained the application, stating that it was to provide ten boxes for distribution to front line services who may come into contact with victims of domestic violence. The boxes would contain a variety of resources and information, plus a mobile phone. Training would also be given. Some money had been made available from the Saffron Management Board and the JAG to cover the training aspect. The meeting fully supported the application, noting the importance of the issue.

AGREED: that the application for £500 be supported.

36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting was informed of the New Horizons project, an interactive media project for young people. The project was being run by Engage Multimedia in conjunction with Saffron Arts Forum. More information was available from Kellie Bugby on 0116 2249790.

37. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 3.43pm.

