

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 18 June 2012

Held at: Highfields Community Centre, Melbourne Road.

Who was there:

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Dr Chowdhury
Councillor Dawood

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 Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries	Police Issues Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries.
The New Orange Bag Recycling Scheme Find out more about this scheme, which is to shortly be introduced.	Traffic Issues Talk to officers from Leicester City Council about traffic issues in Spinney Hills.
Home Energy Advice Service Obtain information about schemes operated by the Home Energy Advice Centre	School Admissions Find out more about the school admissions service in 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.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Dawood was elected as Chair and welcomed everyone to the Spinney Hill Community Meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Priya Thamotheram.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this time.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillors were asked to agree the minutes of the previous Spinney Hill Community Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous Spinney Hill Community Meeting held on 27th March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. VOLUNTARY ACTION LEICESTER

Heather Jallands, Development and Volunteering Advisor, Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), was invited to give a presentation on the Group Support Service offered by her organisation.

Details of the free advice, support and training offered for not-for-profit groups in Leicester and Leicestershire was outlined. Particular reference was made to the support for groups offered through the VAL helpline, the group support drop-in sessions, 1:1 support through the referral system, the VAL training programme, online resource centre, the funding toolkit, and the VAL news and E-briefing updates.

Leaflets relating to these areas of support had been made available to members of the community as part of the information session prior to the formal part of the meeting.

The meeting was also informed that a variety of funding sources existed. The ways in which groups could be helped by VAL to access these funds were explained. Details of the funding database created by VAL, which held information relating to Government and other sources of financial assistance, including lottery funding, trust funds and local funding was explained. The meeting noted that many of these funding sources, particularly small local trust funds were not known to groups and funding opportunities could be missed due to a lack of awareness.

In respect of the Spinney Hills ward itself it was reported that in the 2011/2012 financial year a total of £149,420 had been sourced to assist the work of various groups and organisations within the ward.

As part of the presentation, a recent BME Research Report concerning the impact of the current economic climate on the voluntary sector was also made available to members of the community. The report had been prepared jointly with The Race Equality Centre, Highfields Community Association and African Caribbean Citizens Forum and concentrated on the effects on the Spinney Hills ward.

In concluding her presentation, Heather Jallands referred to the other main VAL services including the assistance given to volunteering and to various local Forums. A Future Focus Event was being held on 12th July 2012 at Parklands, Oadby and members of the community were encouraged to attend this information sharing event.

Heather Jallands was thanked for her presentation by the Chair.

In reply to a question from a Councillor, it was confirmed that, following an update of VAL's database and revisions to internal systems, a breakdown of the total funds offered to groups and organisations operating within the City Council's boundary could be extracted from the figures available for the County as a whole.

A member of public asked a further question concerning the lead-in time for future training programmes. It was explained that in most cases a programme could be arranged after one month's notice depending on the amount of information provided by the voluntary organisation.

In closing the item the Chair discussed the need for VAL to be more visible in the community and suggested that surgeries be organised and advertised. Heather Jallands explained that VAL was aware of this need and she commented that various initiatives were being currently considered to raise the level of activity in communities.

At this point of the meeting, the Chair agreed to consider the following additional item:

6. HIGHFIELDS AFTER SCHOOL CARE CLUB

The Chair invited representatives of the Highfields After School Care Club to address the meeting.

Three parents addressed the meeting and referred to a petition which had recently been submitted to the Council, together with individual letters. The petition raised concerns at the possible closure of the Club following the Council's review of services for Children and Young People (the 0-19 Strategic Commissioning Review).

It was stated that the concerns of parents related to the process undertaken as part of the review including the decision to 'group' all After School Clubs into one category.

In their opinion this method did not give proper consideration to areas which face higher poverty, unemployment and economic difficulties.

The parents also referred to suggested alternative after school care which had caused considerable concern to them. These included an expectation that schools would continue to make the provision by remaining open. However it was felt that this would not give the same level of social interaction for children as a separate After School Club.

A suggestion that the Council's 'Playrangers' may be able to assist in out of school activities had not been supported by parents as it was not felt that a suitable level of care would be provided.

The parents commented on the current lack of private childcare places and to the significant costs involved. They considered that working families would be punished by the Club's closure if parents had to give up work.

In closing their address to the meeting, the parents asked that increased information and updates on the progress of the petition and more detailed responses to their letters were required. It was agreed that the issues raised by the parents would be forwarded to the Director, Young Peoples Services.

The Chair thanked the parents for making their address and confirmed to the meeting that the Review had been completed but that the recommendations of the review had not yet been considered by the Council's Executive. He commented that no decision had been made at present and that the petition, letters and the comments made at this meeting would be given proper consideration in due course.

7. CITY WARDEN SERVICE PRESENTATION

Darren Evans, City Warden, gave a presentation on the main issues that the Wardens Service was currently helping with. He gave information on the education and prevention work including initiatives within schools.

In respect of problems and issues relating to enforcement he gave a detailed update concerning littering, dog fouling, bins on streets, fly posting, small scale fly tipping, graffiti; and vehicles being repaired or advertised for sale on the road.

Photographs of the results of recent clean-up operations in St. Matthews and at the Vulcan Road Play Area were circulated.

In reply to questions Darren Evans confirmed that the amount and scale of fly-tips had reduced following an increase in the use of recycling initiatives. The problem of

unleashed dogs on parks was also raised and it was agreed that more liaison would be undertaken with Parks officers to minimise problems.

Concerns were raised in respect of the extent of dog fouling on Spinney Hills Park. Darren confirmed that another Warden covered the park and that greater enforcement was to commence in light of this problem.

It was requested that the thanks of the meeting be recorded to the City Wardens, particularly in view of the excellent work carried out at the Vulcan Road Play Area.

8. HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC UPDATE

David Poxon from the Council's Highways Design and Maintenance Team gave a presentation which provided an overview of key transport issues within the ward.

He made particular reference to problems reported by residents in Vulcan Road where closure works had led to an area of amenity benches and planters being misused by youngsters. It was noted that a suggested scheme to remove the benches and planters was not viable as its cost could not be met from the highways budget. In reply to a question concerning the estimate, the extent of works required was explained. In reply to a question from a member of public it was confirmed that the works would not have been subject to a tender process as they would fall under works undertaken by City Highways.

The meeting also discussed increased problems caused by on-street parking at schools and where greater enforcement could be undertaken. Police representatives took details of the particular areas and agreed to follow up the issue.

In relation to traffic problems generally, members of public commented on the high speed of motorists using Madras Road and Malabar Road and a dedicated crossing point to improve road safety was suggested. The meeting was informed that there were significant delays in achieving crossing schemes as over 60 schemes were awaiting feasibility surveys. Police representatives agreed to take the comments made on board with a view to increasing enforcement in the area.

In closing the item, the Chair reported that the Ward Councillors had arranged a 'walk-around' meeting with Officers from Traffic Management to improve awareness of the issues within the ward.

9. POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

PCSO Gardener and PC Barber presented crime figures for the ward. It was reported that in the period from April to May a 3.4% reduction in overall crime had been achieved although burglaries had increased from 4 incidents to 9 incidents. Details of initiatives to reduce this trend were presented, including increased patrols and offering free window alarms to residents.

It was also reported that heightened awareness of problems caused by leaving 'items on view' would reduce incidents of theft, particularly from motor vehicles sheds and outbuildings.

An anti-drug initiative had recently been undertaken following information provided by the public. This had led to 15 arrests, with three persons charged and sentenced to date. PCSO Gardener thanked the public and reminded the meeting that such operations often rely on public information to be a success.

The Police were thanked for their presentation and agreed that for future meetings crime figures could be reported as actual numbers of incidents, rather than as percentage figures to show trends. It was further reported that figures which gave a breakdown of the age and ethnicity of perpetrators be provided.

Nazira Vania, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, addressed the meeting and referred to recent complaints concerning fly-tipping and other issues which had been resolved by multi agency work, including Community Safety Meetings.

She reported on the expected increase in anti-social behaviour during the forthcoming school holidays and in reply to questions clarified the ways in which known trends could be dealt with.

In conclusion of the item the police agreed to review the response to problems reported at Maidstone Road area, arising from the rivalries of pupils at the local schools.

10. BUDGET

Anita Patel, the Member Support Officer to the Spinney Hill Community Meeting presented the Community Meeting budget and explained that this was the first meeting of the new financial year.

Anita explained that the Ward Councillors had made decisions on the following funding applications:

Application 1: Sikh Community Centre– Gymnasium Equipment and new musical instruments.

Amount Requested: £3,000

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be not supported.

Application 2: Highfields Library – Health Matters in Highfields

Amount Requested: £765

It was noted that this application had been fast-tracked prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be partially supported to the value of £400.

Application 3: Highfields Community Association – Highfields Festival Event

Amount Requested: £2,000

RESOLVED:

that the funding application from the Police and City Council Community Safety be supported in full to the value of £750

Application 4: AK Fitness – Street Party for Queen’s Jubilee

It was noted that this application had been fast-tracked prior to the meeting.

Amount Requested: £500

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £500.

Application 5: Somali Advice and Services – workshops to empower young people

Amount Requested: £913

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £463

Application 6: Netherhall School – Cycling Club and Play Equipment for students

Amount Requested: £1,000

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be partially supported to the value of £400.

Application 7: Champion Boxing Club – Boxing Club Equipment

Amount Requested: £1,060

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the funding application be partially supported to the value of £1000.

Application 8 – Live Sport – Summer sports activities sessions for young people.

Amount Requested: £620

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the funding application be partially supported to the value of £500.

Application 9 –Redeemed Christian Church of God–Diamond Jubilee Street party Event

Amount Requested: £800

It was noted that this application had been fast-tracked prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the funding application be partially supported to the value of £500

Application 10 –Gandal Media–‘Youngsters and Media’

Amount Requested: £965

RESOLVED:

that the application be deferred, and that further information be obtained prior to reaching a decision.

Application 11: St Matthews Children’s Action Group – National Play Day Event

Amount Requested: £425

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £425.

The Chair stated that in future, all successful applicants will be asked to report back to the Community Meeting to provide an overview of the project/event which was supported. It was also agreed that copies of publicity in relation to events supported by the community meeting be sent to the Ward Councillor. Furthermore, the Councillors requested that all such publicity would need to state on it that support from the Ward Community budget had been obtained.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CHANNEL 4 TV DOCUMENTARY

Councillor Chowdhury circulated an email received from Channel 4 Television which gave information of a forthcoming documentary series concerning families in Britain in 2012.

The email communication regarded Leicester as a vibrant city and a great place to find dynamic families to take part in the documentary series.

Contact details of the researchers involved in the series were included and members of the community were asked to take away the information and contact Channel 4 with the details of any interested families.

12. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm.

