

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 7 January 2013

**Held at: Evington Road United Reform Church, Evington Road,
Leicester. LE2 1QJ**

Who was there:

Councillor Lucy Chaplin
Councillor Iqbal Desai
Councillor Mustafa Kamal

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.
Benefits Advice and Services To receive information.	City Warden Obtain information on the services available including the ‘One Clean Leicester’ and ‘Anti-graffiti’ programmes

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.

67. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Chaplin was elected Chair for the meeting.

68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Kamal.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this time.

70. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Stoneygate Community Meeting held on 1st October 2012 were considered and the following comments were made: -

Minute 59 – Minutes of Previous Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Amend paragraph to read: -

“ – Councillor Desai stated that he wished to clarify that, despite the comments made at the last meeting about him not responding to ‘e’ mails, he had not recently, **during his absence**, received any ‘e’ mails to respond to.”

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Stoneygate Community Meeting held on 1st October 2012, subject to the above amendment, be confirmed as a correct record.

71. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Chair stated that she was still awaiting statistical information regarding parking tickets issued/parking enforcement issues in the Stoneygate area.

72. WELFARE AND BENEFITS CHANGES UPDATE

Ferhana Bhogadia, representing Welfare and Benefits Advice attended the meeting and gave an overview of the changes to Welfare and Benefits that were coming into force during 2013. The major changes would be affecting a wide range of people in the City who were currently in receipt of benefits, although the changes would not be affecting those of pensionable age. The full extent and detail of all of the changes were still awaited from the Government, although most of the detail was now clear.

Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit

Ferhana stated that consultation on these changes had concluded in October 2012.

The Government were to cut the current budget paid to Local Authorities and those people of working age on benefits would, from April 2013, have to pay a contribution towards Council Tax.

If a person on benefits lived in a house with too many bedrooms for themselves and family, then they would receive a cut his benefits.

Crisis loans etc. were currently available and administered by the Department of Work and Pensions but would now be administered by Local Authorities. Discretionary Housing Payments would, after April 2013, no longer cover shortfalls in Council Tax.

Personal Independent Payment (PIP)

Care and Mobility – there will be two rates for Care and two rates for Mobility under the new reforms although the thresholds would be much higher than previously before payment allowed. It was expected that the whole process would take until 2015 to be fully implemented.

In future one Benefit would cover all previous benefits and there would be a cap on what an individual could receive. Unemployed people in receipt of benefits would now have to meet certain requirement in seeking work as failure to meet any of these new requirements would result in sanctions. These sanctions could mean up to four weeks without a particular benefit.

The Chair stated that the Government had instigated the Welfare and benefit changes and the City Council had limited powers to determine when Housing Benefit would be implemented.

Woody questioned whether those providing advice locally would be able to contact Council Officers for advice. Ferhana stated that a series of public meetings would be held and that contact details would be published on the City Council website. Advice would also be provided by bodies such as Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) and Mosaic and officers were in the process of developing a detailed Sef-Help Guide on the various changes, this was now nearing completion.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

74. LOCAL POLICING UPDATE

Pc. Kully Lally attended the meeting and gave a brief update on local policing in the area.

The following crime statistics were reported for the Stoneygate area, comparing 2011 with 2012: -

2011

2012

Burglary Dwelling	124	141
Theft from Shops	30	21
Theft from Motor Vehicles	89	138
Drugs Offences	46	68
Anti-Social Behaviour	76	62

Work was underway to ban alcohol from Onslow Park and Cedar Park. The only Alcohol Control Zone in the area was currently in the City Centre, hence the work to get a similar zone locally.

Police looking to get one side of Ball Court at Cedar Park blocked off to help prevent drug dealing.

A member of the public questioned whether it would be possible to return the CCTV camera to Upper Tichborne Street as it had proved very effective in getting drug dealers out of the area. Now that the camera had been removed the dealers were gradually returning to the area. Pc Lally stated that a person had been arrested earlier in the day for drugs offences and was in custody.

Jude, representing the Highfields Centre stated that the Centre were currently running late night classes for young people (8-25 year olds) on two nights (Friday and Saturday) and questioned whether there had been a reduction in youth related incidents in the area as a consequence. Pc Lally stated that there had been a reduction of ASB incidents in the Stoneygate area of late. Jude stated that she would forward publicity of the late night classes for circulation.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

75. THEMED DISCUSSION ON THE IMPROVEMENTS TO EVINGTON ROAD

At the start of the discussion on Evington Road issues it was stated that a meeting had been arranged by ERNA on Thursday 10th January at this venue as the building was due to be sold by the Church and likely utilised for other uses. Councillor Sarah Russell, Assistant City Mayor (Neighbourhood Services) would be attending the meeting and it was stressed that the Church building was very important to the area.

Members of the public were invited to raise issues that were of concern and these are set out below: -

- Traffic levels
- Speeding traffic
- Inconsiderate parking at certain points along road, including at bus stops and outside bank
- Car parking issues generally, enforcement should be more effective
- Re-create former 'One-Way' system on part of Evington Road
- Too many Take-Away shops – becoming less of a shopping area
- Increasing number of off-licences

- Concerns around current mix of shops (no baker, general butcher or fishmonger)
- Litter problems
- Personal safety after 9.00pm
- Like to see more in the way of plants/bushes along road
- Improved street lighting
- Car ownership has meant that people use local shops less – need to encourage people to use local shops
- Bank should clear rubbish from around ATM machine
- Shops should clear their rubbish
- Take-Aways should clear their rubbish
- More bins near mosque and Co-op store

It was further stated that the former Hogan's bar was to be converted into a 200 capacity restaurant and this would likely lead to further car parking problems in the area.

Drains on Evington Road and some of the adjoining side streets were prone to minor flooding after prolonged rainfall.

In summary the Chair stated that following discussions there were principally five main areas of concern that could be referred to officers to look at and report back, these were as follows:-

- 1) Traffic and Parking
- 2) Details of Council Policy – Licensing, Take-Aways and Off-Licences
- 3) Litter and Cleansing – to include provision of plants and shrubs
- 4) Street Lighting, Pavements and Drains – ask officers to investigate
- 5) Being Positive about the area – seek advice from Castle Ward Councillors.

RESOLVED:

that the areas of concern identified above be referred to the officers to investigate and report back.

73. CITY WARDEN UPDATE

Darren Evans, City Warden attended the meeting and gave a brief update of work he had been carrying out in the area.

Darren stated that he had undertaken project work with local businesses encouraging them to sign up to keep the fronts of their premises clear of litter. To date 13 local businesses had signed up and 6 businesses had put notices in their windows encouraging passers-by to keep the area tidy.

Bins on streets project had been carried out on a number of streets in the area since August 2012. In August 2012 there had been around 200 bins left on these streets, now there were 12. Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued to the occupiers of these properties. Work was now to start on several streets on the other side of Evington Road to those dealt with previously.

Work was soon to start to get several front gardens of properties fronting onto Evington Road tidied up.

A littering project was about to start whereby Fixed Penalty Notices would be issued to persons seen to drop litter.

Cases of fly-tipping were on the increase in the area and work was underway to try and ascertain who was responsible so that the necessary action could be taken.

A member of the public suggested that press coverage should be utilised to publicise certain aspects of the work being done and Darren stated that he would issue press releases where possible in future.

Members of the public expressed a view that Darren was a valuable asset to the Ward and that it was a shame that he was currently spread across two large Wards. The Chair stated that she had fought for the retention of the City Warden Service but it had not been possible to retain the full complement of City Wardens. Councillor Desai stated that there was a possibility that the number of City Wardens would be increased soon from 12 to 14.

Councillor Unsworth questioned whether, when Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to householders was the legal part of the document translated into several languages, if not it would be possible to check the nationality of the respective residents from the Electoral Roll and issue the appropriate translation. Darren stated that this was not currently the case but that there was a telephone number quoted to obtain a translation.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

76. BUDGET

Kalvaran Sandhu, Member Support Officer attended the meeting and presented the Community Meeting Budget. Kalvaran reported that, prior to this meeting £7,300 had been allocated, leaving a total of £10,700 to be spent.

The following applications had been received since the last meeting and were to be considered: -

- i) **Art House** **£250**
An application submitted on behalf of Art House to fund part of the cost of hiring two City Council Recreational Transport minibuses, with drivers, to transport people between the Art House venues.

The Art House event was planned for 8/9 June 2013 and involved over 40 local artists in homes and studios in Stoneygate, Clarendon Park and Knighton.

Councillor Unsworth, in attendance as a local resident, disclosed an Other Disclosable Interest as he was married to one of the artists.

RESOLVED:

that, having considered the application it be **agreed** to support the application in full - **£250**.

ii) **HART trips** **£500**

An application was submitted by Highfields Association of Residents and Tenants (HART) to fund approximately one third of the cost of arranging three trips, at a cost of £500 each, for the benefit of local residents who were unable to fund such activities.

RESOLVED:

that, having considered the application it be **agreed** to support the application in full - **£500**.

iii) **Project Y** **£5000**

An application was submitted by Highfields Association of Residents and Tenants (HART) and Evington Road Neighbourhood Association (ERNA) to fund a proposal to bring young people within the local diverse community together through their enthusiasm for art. The aim was to run a series of five facilitated arts workshops, each of which would be for four hours where young people aged 13 -25 could learn and share arts skills and techniques. These would be followed by a public exhibition and demonstration of their work. It was envisaged that the workshops and the final event would take place at The Ark Theatre in Sparkenhoe Street.

RESOLVED:

That, having considered the application, and generally supporting the proposal it be **agreed** to make available funding of **£3,000** to get this proposal started, particularly as activities for young people in the Stoneygate area were diminishing. Should the funding allocated not be utilised for the purpose outlined the City Council would expect the funding to be returned.

iv) **Highfields Festival** **£2,000**

An application was tabled to part fund the third Highfields Festival to be held in June 2013. Funding was being sought from Stoneygate, Spinney Hills and Castle Wards.

Members questioned how many people actually attend the 2012 Festival from the Stoneygate area and were informed that this information was not available.

RESOLVED:

that, having considered the application it be agreed to support the application to a maximum of £1,000, with a request that the organisers monitor more effectively the attendees to the festival that could ultimately assist future decisions.

77. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.30pm.