

Rushey Mead Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Thursday, 10 January 2013

**Held at: Soar Valley Community College, Gleneagles Avenue,
Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Culdipp Singh Bhatti MBE
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Councillor Piara Singh Clair MBE

Councillor Ross Willmott

Information on the following topics was available in the room:

- City Warden Issues
- Local policing and community safety.

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.

60. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Willmott was elected as Chair for the meeting. He introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

63. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Paul Barker, Parks Officer with Leicester City Council, thanked residents for the success of the recent campaign to stop the feeding of ducks and geese at Watermead Country Park, (minute 52, “Additional Item – Update on the Feeding of Geese on Watermead Park”, referred). A flock of lapwings recently had been seen on the island, which is something that would not have happened before the campaign. The Meeting also noted that the campaign had received an award for innovation from Keep Britain Tidy.

The minutes of the Rushey Mead Community Meeting held on 11 October 2012 were then agreed as a correct record.

64. SOAR VALLEY COLLEGE

Mel Berry, Principal of Soar Valley College, explained that the College had been open over three years now and was very involved with the community. For example:-

- There was a thriving programme of adult education classes, although the number it was possible to offer had reduced due to cuts in government funding;
- The conference room in the training centre was used by a lot of other groups and organisations. For example, year 5 of Catherine Street Junior School used the room following the recent fire at its premises; and

- Community work with children and older people also took place. For example, a Christmas party was provided for elderly people from a neighbouring home, students learnt first aid, and opportunities to work with charities were sought.

During discussion on this, Mr Berry recognised that there were traffic problems in the area outside the College. The City Council had helped by installing fencing, a crossing and speed humps, but it was not possible to take any other measures to slow down traffic, as access was needed for emergency vehicles.

Residents explained that skip lorries often woke people up in the morning when going over the speed humps. The Chair advised that the humps had been installed at the request of residents, in order to slow down traffic as much as possible, but Council officers could be asked to consider whether the nature of the humps could be changed.

Residents also raised concerns that they had people parking outside their homes from about 8.00 am to 8.00 pm daily. Mr Berry advised that people dropping off students at the College had been asked to do so away from the premises. College staff were at the front of the premises every night, but it was not possible for the College to require people to park in specific locations. It was noted that the Police could only prosecute people for obstruction if vehicles were parked inconsiderately and that the City Wardens had been asked to work with the Police on this problem.

It was noted that parking problems were experienced by a lot of schools. They had tried to resolve the problems in various ways, but the impact was often short-lived. Mr Berry advised the meeting that Soar Valley College was very involved in creating a travel plan. As a result, approximately 50 – 60 students cycled to school and a lot more were now walking.

An invitation was extended to residents to visit the College for a tour of the facilities. Anyone interested in doing this was asked to leave their details with Anita Patel, the Members Support Officer.

65. CATHERINE JUNIOR SCHOOL - UPDATE FOLLOWING THE FIRE AT THE SCHOOL

The Chair reported that portacabins for use by the pupils had been put up on the school field on Loughborough Road and were likely to stay there until Christmas. The generator being used had been very noisy, but had now been replaced with a quieter one.

The City Mayor and Executive would discuss whether the school would be rebuilt, but no decisions had been taken on this yet.

66. UPDATE ON LOCAL BUS SERVICES

Following the discussion on bus services at the last meeting, (minute 49, “Local Bus Services and the Bus Users’ Panel”, referred), the Chair reported that Steve Zanker, of First Group, had provided an update on local bus services. Mr Zanker advised that the company was looking at service 21/21A with a view to increasing passenger

numbers, but it was difficult to provide a frequent service to and from schools and colleges, mainly due to their travel requirements being at the same time, (school start and finish).

Mr Zanker also reported that there were no plans in the short term to change services to include Gateway College, but the company would continue to liaise with the Council should there be opportunities for the future.

Due to problems found in walking back up Peebles Way from Gleneagles Avenue, residents asked if consideration could be given to alternate services on the 22 route going down Peebles Way and then Gleneagles Way. It was noted that the Council had no money available to fund changes of this nature, but that the company could be asked to consider the proposal.

Residents also asked why the buses stopped running so early in the evening. The Chair suggested that it was likely to be for commercial reasons, but the question would be passed to the bus company.

AGREED:

That the Members Support Officer be asked to write to the First bus company to:-

- a) advise that services 21/21A were still needed and suggesting that route 22 could be altered as outlined above; and
- b) ask why buses stopped running so early in the evening.

67. UPDATE ON THE SAINSBURY'S DEVELOPMENT ON MELTON ROAD

Angie Patterson, a Senior Planner with Leicester City Council, reported that:-

- Planning permission for development by Sainsbury's had been issued on 12 December 2012;
- The timetable provided by Sainsbury's before planning permission was granted stated that it was hoped that work would start in either March or April 2013 and that the store would open before Christmas 2013. However, before work could start, Sainsbury's was required to meet pre-commencement conditions, such as providing information on materials to be used for the building and the petrol station;
- A local agreement required Sainsbury's to make a contribution to the park immediately next to the site. This was likely to be to improve sports facilities or play equipment. Some public art work also was to be provided and there would be consultation on the details of this;
- There was not likely to be much disruption during the development on the former GE Lighting site, as there was plenty of room on the site, (for example, for site compounds);

- The contractors at the former GE Lighting site would be required to take traffic considerations into account during the development. For example, movements of vehicles in and out of the site, deliveries and employee parking arrangements would have to be agreed with the Council;
- Various highways works remained to be agreed with the Council, including a new bus lane on Melton Road, that would lead to the bus lane already operating on the city side of Melton Road;
- It was likely that there would be some disruption while the highways works were underway, but there were various things the contractors would be required to do to minimise this;
- No highway work would be permitted over the Christmas period;
- The employment land on the site was to be marketed, as Sainsbury's did not currently have end users. The Council had to agree to the marketing strategy and Sainsbury's had to market the site for 18 months. There would only be light industrial use in this part of the development, due to the proximity of the site to residential properties;
- No work would be done on the Belgrave Road site until the store on the former GE Lighting site was open and trading, so development there would not start until 2014;
- Sainsbury's would have to apply to the government Department of Transport for a stopping up order to close the Belgrave flyover, as it was adopted highway. Sainsbury's could not apply for this until planning permission was granted, but the Department of Transport could still refuse permission. If permission was not granted, the scheme for that area could not proceed as proposed, as the consent given relied on the flyover being removed;
- If approval was given to remove the flyover, it would not be demolished until the new store on the former GE Lighting site was open for trade;
- The method of removal of the flyover would be agreed with Council highways officers;
- A transport assessment was submitted with the planning application for the development of the Belgrave Road site. The highway authority concluded through this that it was possible to remove the flyover; and
- Following the removal of the Belgrave flyover, there would be three lanes of traffic along Belgrave Road. Once the development there was complete, this would be reduced to two lanes of traffic.

AGREED:

That planning officers be asked to let the Meeting know what the requirements were for advertising the closure of the Belgrave flyover and how members of the public can participate in consultation on this.

68. MELTON ROAD POLICE STATION AND COMMUNITY POLICING UPDATE

PC Rob Pountney of Leicestershire Police advised the meeting that his role had changed, so he was now a Beacon Officer. Other officers had been moved round and/or had their shift pattern changed, so that more people would be available when needed.

PC Pountney then reported as follows:-

- Overall, reported crime had reduced over the last 3 months, compared to the same time last year:-
 - Burglaries from dwellings had reduced from 38 to 28;
 - Theft from unattended motor vehicles had reduced from 26 to 13;
 - Burglaries at premises other than dwellings were up to 13 from 11;
 - Robberies had reduced from 7 to 6;
 - Cycle thefts had reduced from 5 to 3;
 - The theft of motor vehicles had increased from zero to 3

Rushey Mead therefore had one of the lowest crime rates in the city;

- The Police did a lot of work with secondary schools. For example:-
 - Participation in citizenship lessons;
 - Towards the end of the summer term, a week would be spent targeting anti-social behaviour; and
 - Maintaining an office at Soar Valley College;
- A Neighbourhood Watch area had been set up in Lockerbie Avenue. All areas were encouraged to do this, as a way for people to help protect their own neighbourhood; and
- The Police relied on information being provided on activities in people's areas. All residents therefore were encouraged to contact the Police with concerns and/or information.

In response to comments from a resident, PC Pountney undertook to visit the area at the back of the Lockerbie Road shops in which young people were congregating.

Inspector Ed McBryde-Wilding of Leicestershire Police reminded the meeting that rumours of the possible closure of Melton Road police Station previously had been discussed, (minute 55, "Police and Community Safety Update", 11 October 2012 referred). Nothing definite had been decided about this, but a footfall analysis showed that only one or two people a day were using that station. The team policing the Rushey Mead ward was based at Keyham Lane police station, so if Melton Road police station did close it would have little impact on policing in the ward.

Concerns were raised that there could be an increase in Asian homes being targeted for burglaries since banks stopped providing safety deposit boxes. Sergeant McBryde-Wilding advised that this was a national issue, as the availability of safety deposit boxes had reduced due to insurance problems arising when it had not been possible to verify the contents of some boxes.

However, the National Bank of India was considering increasing the number of safety deposit boxes it had available. There also was a private company in Birmingham that provided safety deposit boxes and the Police were working with them to see if a facility could be provided in Leicester. In the meantime, residents were reminded that a personal safe in a house should not be stored in an obvious place and should not be bolted to the floor.

A resident reported that groups of young people gathered outside the bank on the corner by the roundabout on Humberstone Lane. Sergeant McBryde-Wilding advised that he was not aware of any reports of anti-social behaviour at this location. PC Pountney reported that young people also gathered in the park in the Christopher Drive area, but that part of Humberstone Lane was very quiet, so did not always get visited much by Police patrols.

The meeting was advised that, if the Police had not had any problems reported, they were unlikely to stop groups of young people, but if there were known problems resources could be targeted to them. It was stressed that reporting problems did not criminalise young people, as the Police could explore resources and/or services that could be put in to an area.

A resident reminded the meeting that Section 106 funding was available that needed to be spent on provision for young people. One suggestion was that a kick-wall could be provided for use when playing football. The Police suggested that they could liaise with the agencies concerned to consider what the best use of the money would be.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Police visit the area at the back of the Lockerbie Road shops in which young people are congregating;
- 2) That consideration be given by the Ward Councillors to how they can support the work being done to increase the number of safety deposit boxes available for personal use; and
- 3) That the Police work with the agencies concerned to consider what the best use would be for the Section 106 funding available for provision for young people in the Ward.

69. CITY WARDEN AND STREET SCENE ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Mo Patel and Jethro Swift, City Wardens with Leicester City Council, introduced themselves to the meeting.

Mo Patel provided the following update:-

- Problems had been encountered with dog fouling on Trevino Drive. The road had been visited and the Wardens would continue to monitor the situation;
- The feeding of birds in Trevino Drive had stopped;
- The amount of litter in Gibbs Lane was being monitored, including that generated by businesses;
- The project to reduce the amount of food being given to the wild fowl at Watermead Country Park was progressing well; and
- The abandoned car on Rosedale Avenue was scheduled to be removed by the Council.

Attention was drawn to the leaflet tabled at the meeting that presented the City Warden's action plan for the ward. Views on issues and areas that should be targeted were invited.

In response to concerns from residents, the City Wardens undertook to investigate the rubbish at the road bridge on Gypsy Lane and take any necessary action. Concern also was expressed that rubbish was accumulating in the areas around the Lockerbie Walk shops and outside the pub on Nicklaus Road. The City Wardens advised that any other suggestions for areas to be cleaned up were welcome.

Residents expressed concern that more bins were needed at the shops on Nicklaus Road, especially now the shops were open for longer. The Chair suggested that the possibility of funding some additional bins, possibly from the Ward Community Budget, could be considered. In addition, the shrubbery in the area would be checked to make sure that it was not concealing rubbish.

It was recognised that having litter and other rubbish in certain areas encouraged people to leave more. The Council therefore tried to keep the city as clean as possible. City Wardens visited schools as often as possible to educate pupils about issues such as littering and residents were encouraged to let the Wardens know of problem areas.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Members Support Officer be asked to investigate whether Ward Community Budget funding is available to purchase additional rubbish bins for outside the shops on Nicklaus Road; and
- 2) That the City Wardens be asked to:-
 - a) investigate the rubbish at the road bridge on Gypsy Lane, outside the shops on Lockerbie Walk and in the area around the pub on Nicklaus Road and take any necessary action; and

- b) ensure that the shrubbery outside the shops on Nicklaus Road is in such a condition that it does not conceal rubbish.

70. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

a) Grants Previously Approved for Payment

The Chair advised that the following grants had already been approved for payment under the Council's fast track procedure:-

- i) The Parish of our Lady of Good Counsel – £300 for a children's Christmas party;
- ii) Rushey Mead Library – £400 for new toys for Toddler Time sessions at the library; and
- iii) Shobna Patel, Community Safety Team – £250 for 100 stick-on window shock alarms that would be distributed to vulnerable sections of the Ward.

The Chair advised that some window shock alarms were available at the meeting and others would be distributed in liaison with the Ward Councillors and City Wardens. Further alarms could be bought at Rushey Mead Library.

b) Applications Submitted for Approval

i) Archer Close Grass Verge Protection

Submitted by: Mike Pears, Team Leader Highway Asset Management, Leicester City Council

Amount requested: £2,000

The Chair invited residents to let Ward Councillors know of any other areas that could benefit from similar protection.

AGREED:

That a grant of £2,000 to Mike Pears (Team Leader – Highway Asset Management, Leicester City Council) for verge protection in Archer Close be supported.

ii) Saturday Morning Dance Workout for Ladies

Submitted by: Lucy Bailey

Amount requested: £1,000

It was noted that the proposed classes would be provided free of charge.

AGREED:

That a grant of £1,000 to Lucy Bailey for Saturday morning dance workout sessions for ladies be supported.

iii) Leicester Young Readers Programme at Rushey Mead Library

Submitted by: Rushey Mead Library
Amount requested: £480

AGREED:

That a grant of £480 to Rushey Mead Library for books for the Leicester Young Readers Programme at Rushey Mead Library be supported.

iv) Soul to Soul Meditation

Submitted by: Sushila Parmar & Jagruti Chauhan
Amount requested: £1,210

AGREED:

- 1) That a grant of £605 be approved to Sushila Parmar and Jagruti Chauhan for meditation workshops be supported and that the Members Services Officer ask the City Council to waive the other half of the facilities hire charge; and
- 2) That the applicants be invited to discuss with the Ward Councillors the possibility of using Ward surgery facilities for these workshops.

v) Football and Fitness Education for Girls

Submitted by: don't just kick it
Amount requested: £1,080

On behalf of the applicant, Mr Johnson explained that girls often were shy of attending fitness sessions, as they were primarily groups for boys. This scheme therefore would create a weekly development centre for girls that specialised in fitness and football.

AGREED:

That a grant of £1,080 to "don't just kick it" for football and fitness education for girls be supported.

c) Friends of Watermead

On behalf of the Friends of Watermead, Catherine Tregaskes thanked the Community Meeting for the grant that had been given by the Meeting towards the Watermead Family Discovery Day. This funding had been used towards things such as providing first aid cover, hiring portable toilets and having crafts people at the event.

71. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED:

That the next Rushey Mead Community Meeting will be held at 6.30 pm on Thursday 14 March at the Methodist Church in Edgehill Road.

72. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

73. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.24 pm

