

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Thursday, 9 May 2013

Held at: The Mayflower Centre, Ethel Road, Leicester, LE5 5ND

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.

<p>Ward Councillors and General Information</p> <p>Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries</p>	<p>Police Issues</p> <p>Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries.</p>
<p>Benefits Service</p> <p>Talk to Officers about proposed new methods affecting benefits payments.</p>	

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.

84. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Chaplin was elected as Chair for the meeting.

85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chaplin reported that she had been accepted to display works at the Arthouse, for which she would receive a fee.

She advised the meeting that half of the fee received would be donated to Age UK.

87. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the Stoneygate Community Meeting held on 28 March 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

88. MATTER ARISING

FORMER VARSITY PUBLIC HOUSE, 146 LONDON ROAD

Councillor Chaplin reported that she had attended the Council's Planning and Development Control Committee on 24 April 2013 with residents who had objected to the proposal to convert the premises and shop frontage.

She confirmed that she had spoken at the meeting in objection to the application, along with two residents. The reasons for the objections principally related to the design of the proposed shop frontage and the envisaged parking problems. It was reported that despite the objections raised, the planning application had been approved at the meeting, although not by a unanimous vote.

Councillor Chaplin stated that the premises would now be the subject of a licensing application and it was considered that any off-sales would be likely to cause public drinking and public order problems. Representations were therefore being submitted to oppose the licencing application.

The position and update was noted.

89. POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Police Sergeant Danny Graham was welcomed to the meeting.

He reminded the meeting of the beats which were in operation to serve the Ward and submitted statistical information which had shown a dramatic reduction in crime. An analysis of crime in each category was submitted as percentage reductions and PS Graham referred to the recent articles published in the Leicester Mercury which had reported positively on the crime reduction statistics.

In respect of the total figures it was confirmed that 431 crimes had been recorded against the previous year's figure of 567 recorded crimes. Data was also submitted which favourably compared the Ward statistics to other Beats locally.

It was reported with concern that offences of serious sexual assault had increased and PS Graham reported on the nature of the ongoing multi agency work which was being undertaken.

The following Beat priorities were commented on and discussed:

- Onslow/Cedar Park

Anti-social behaviour, including late night drinking and drug use in the Park and surrounding area had led to increased patrols. Following an extensive consultation exercise it was expected that a Designated Public Places Order would be implemented.

- Biddulph Street/Abington Road

Reports of anti-Social Behaviour and nuisance had led to increased patrols being introduced.

- South Highfields

Increased patrols had led to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and those patrols would continue to ensure that there would not be a recurrence of problems.

- Evington Road

It was noted that the issues of planning and licensing of takeaway food outlets was to be discussed later on the Agenda for the meeting, and that the business community would be encouraged to have a greater involvement in the Beat priorities. It was reported that the Police had a view that the business groups in the area had not shown a high level of concern at recent incidents.

In conclusion PS Graham took note of the following issues and problems and commented in reply to question raised by community representatives present:

- Onslow Park

It was reported that the park had been regularly used by a large group of people for barbeques and parties. Although the community use of the park was not objected to it was considered that large scale events should be better controlled. It was also reported that without prior notification or advertisement it was difficult for the Police or Health Officers to provide resources. It was noted that the organisers could be approached to ensure that future events were not held on an impromptu basis, and that organisers and groups be encouraged to apply for Ward Community Funding to help regulate their events. The likelihood that community funding would result in greater community cohesive events was also referred to.

- Evington Road

Having noted the comments made as part of the Ward priorities discussion above, it was reported that some businesses in the Evington Road area had expressed concern at the increasing numbers of bookmakers. It was felt that an increased Police presence was required along the Evington Road to help to deter large numbers of users of the bookmakers from loitering outside premises, as this often caused intimidation to other people. It was reported that an increase in the numbers of unlawful street sellers, graffiti and increased problems caused by illegal parking, including parking in bus lanes had also not been adequately dealt with recently. PS Graham responded by giving details of the current regular patrols and advised that people living, working and shopping in the area should be reassured of the safety of the area.

Notwithstanding the discussion on planning and licensing of takeaway food outlets, which was to be discussed later on the Agenda for the meeting, it was requested that a Business Forum be set up to give a greater emphasis and formality to the views and representations of businesses in the area. It was also considered that the assistance of the Belgrave Road Business Associations would be beneficial in this process and Officers agreed to pursue this request.

- Bridgepond Road Hostel

In reply to a question it was reported that a reduction in reports of problems had been experienced since the closure of the Bridgepond Road Hostel.

PS Graham was thanked for his attendance and report.

90. LICENSING / PLANNING OF TAKEAWAYS ON EVINGTON ROAD

Mike Broster, Head of Licensing and Pollution Control, was welcomed to the meeting.

Mike gave a presentation on the licensing requirements for late night takeaways as for those granted on Evington Road. (Powerpoint presentation slides attached)

It was noted that licences were required for the sale of hot food between 11.00 pm and 5.00 am, for all eat in or take away premises. There was no licensing control over premises that closed before 11.00 pm.

The licensing objectives were reported and the meeting particularly discussed the implications of the need to prevent crime and disorder, increase public safety and prevent public nuisance. A list of those premises for which licences had been issued was presented for information which showed that there were 11 licenses held by premises on Evington Road, 1 on Kingston Road and 1 on Laurel Road.

Mike explained how representations on premises could be made by local residents and ward councillors about applications for new premises. In reply to a question it was confirmed that if no representations were received the Council must grant the licence. The process for applications appearing at hearings before councillors of licensing committee, where representations had been submitted, was also explained. It was emphasised that evidence of existing public nuisance, or likely nuisance, was required as a material objection.

With regard to the concentration of licensed premises it was noted that where public nuisance is caused by the combination of a number of premises the Council could introduce a Saturation Policy, again, evidence of public nuisance would be required. Evidence could include testimonials from residences about public nuisance suffered. It was reported that it was important to tie the nuisance to the individual premises as the source and that individual letters had more impact than petitions. Details of complaints made to the Police or the Council about noise, or anti-social behaviour, would enhance the evidence to support a Saturation Policy.

Mike was thanked for his presentation.

Barbara Whitcombe, Manager of the City Wardens Service, was invited to address the meeting.

Barbara referred to the ongoing environmental and enforcement work in the Ward, making particular reference to Evington Road and the problems of litter arising from the takeaway food outlets.

It was reported that for offences of littering, including littering from vehicles, fixed penalty notices were regularly issued to perpetrators. It was also reported that each business had a duty of care under waste transfer agreements to ensure that waste from their premises was properly disposed of. The increased enforcement of the duty of care had led to fewer problems being experienced of businesses storing their

rubbish at their premises. Fixed Penalty Notices had also been issued to premises where commercial bins had been left out for collection on non-collection days. It was confirmed that this was classed as fly-tipping and warning letters prior to Notices being issued usually led to a satisfactory outcome.

In reply to questions Barbara referred to the problems experienced where illegally parked cars meant that road sweeping and cleaning could not be undertaken outside takeaway food premises, due to obvious kerbside access problems. Colleagues from the parking enforcement section had been informed although it was noted that many locations allowed parking in the evenings and early mornings, at those times that the cleaning was mostly necessary. It was suggested that parking enforcement be discussed at a future meeting. In conclusion of her report, and in Darren Evans's absence, Barbara commented on other areas of the City Warden's work in the Ward.

The Chair commented on the numbers of litter bins provided along the Evington Road and their current locations. She proposed that a Ward Community Funding bid be submitted to increase the numbers of bins, which it was considered would help to alleviate the situation at problem areas. On a show of hands the meeting supported this initiative.

In discussing the amount of pavement seating allowed on Evington Road outside various premises, Mike agreed to check with colleagues that each of the premises concerned held the required highway licence.

The meeting referred to the recurring outcome of debates that there was a need to engage with the business community to address problems and improve the Evington Road area. Officers agreed to contact business community representatives to convene a meeting, which would include Police representatives as well as the City Wardens and Licensing Officers. The Terms of Reference of this meeting would be to identify a list of problems and to agree a prioritised list of actions. Statistical data concerning planning policies and their implementation on the Evington Road area was also requested.

It was also agreed that an update be submitted to the next meeting.

Councillors Desai and Kamal left the meeting at 7:30 pm.

91. BENEFITS PAYMENT CHANGES

Suzanne Collins, Welfare Benefits Service, presented details of changes to the benefits system, some of which had come into effect from April 2013. (Powerpoint slides attached)

The presentation gave details of the background to the changes, confirmed the methods of payment available and advised on where further help and advice could be obtained. Suzanne also circulated relevant publicity material and she was thanked for her presentation and update

92. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET

It was noted that the Ward Community Budget applications had been considered at the previous meeting held on 28 March 2013.

93. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A) COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN

'Reply slips' were circulated and it was reported that the completion of the slips would assist the campaign to secure a community building in the Ward. It was noted that the reuse of part of the Dashwood Road United Reformed Church building was the most viable current proposal.

94. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.