

Rushey Mead Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Wednesday, 4 September 2013

Held at: Rushey Mead Recreation Centre, Gleneagles Avenue,
Leicester LE4 7YJ

Who was there:

Councillor Culdipp Singh Bhatti MBE
--

Councillor Piara Singh Clair MBE

In attendance

Cllr Vi Dempster: Assistant City Mayor, Children, Young People and Schools
--

92. WELCOME

Councillor Culdip Bhatti as Chair, welcomed everyone to the Rushey Mead Community Meeting. He explained that Councillor Dempster, as the Assistant City Mayor for Children, Young People and Schools had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on the possible conversion of Rushey Mead School to academy status. This would be in addition to the items detailed on the agenda.

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Willmott.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

95. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous Rushey Mead Community Meeting held 3 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

96. UPDATE ON THE POSSIBLE CONVERSION OF RUSHEY MEAD SCHOOL TO ACADEMY STATUS

Councillor Dempster, the Assistant City Mayor for Children, Young People and Schools addressed the meeting and explained the current situation relating to Rushey Mead School and its possible conversion to academy status. Cllr Dempster explained that it was not the policy of the council to ask schools to seek academy status. The council did not believe that academy status was in the best interest of Rushey Mead School or any school in the city.

Councillor Dempster made the following points:

- Views had been expressed that one of the benefits would be that academy schools were free of local authority control. However over the last 20 years, schools had gained an increasing amount of autonomy and the limited number of decisions that the local authority made were made in consultation with the school.
- There was also a view that an academy school would have more money than a school which did not have academy status. However it was known that the funding differential would be taken away. At the moment, Rushey Mead would have a 5% increase in their budget; however the school would also have to pay for services which the local authority would normally pay for. Additionally,

with the building schools for the future project, the local authority currently funded 70% of the affordability gap, however, if Rushey Mead became an academy, by the law, the local authority would not be allowed to fund that affordability gap.

- Schools worked in partnership as part of a local family of schools and the decisions that one school made affected other schools. For example, if an individual school changed its term dates, terms and conditions for staff or its admission procedures, these changes would affect other schools in the city.

Councillor Dempster added that over the past 7 years, the local authority's record with schools had improved significantly and was continuing to improve year on year. This was a result of very good partnership working between schools and the local authority. The local authority had the skills to help schools if they were going through a difficult phase, but that safety net would not be there for academy schools. The local authority wanted to do their best for children and therefore they could not support Rushey Mead School in their consultation for academy status.

Councillor Dempster asked attendees to look at the information on the website, reflect and respond to it as they felt to be appropriate.

Councillor Dempster was thanked for attending the meeting.

97. THE NEW SAINSBURY'S DEVELOPMENT ON MELTON ROAD, RUSHEY MEAD

Tess Randles (Community Affairs Team), Alex Shearer (Sainsbury's Project Manager), Stuart Donavan (Associate Director, Longcross, Principal Contractor) and Darryl Stace (Project Manager, Longcross) were present to provide an update on the new Sainsbury's development on Melton Road. The following points were made:

- The structure was approximately 75% complete and soon the internal work would commence.
- Apologies were given for the noise from the construction work, this should ease off imminently.
- The car park area was due to be completed over the next 2 weeks and the mound of rubble would gradually diminish.
- The store should be open before Christmas, though the opening date was yet to be finalised.

Comments were made from attendees that there needed to be a better process for people on site to engage with local residents. People living close to the development site had to cope with noise nuisance and building works being carried out after midnight. An attendee complained that he had telephoned to report the problem and had left messages, though his phone call had not been returned. A representative from the construction company responded that the company did have procedures

which had been reiterated to the team on site. The complaints received were being acted upon and on reflection they accepted that some things could have been done better. In response to a question, attendees were advised that the telephone details of personnel who could be contacted in the event of any problems, were listed on the site hoardings.

Recruitment

There was considerable discussion in relation to recruitment at the new Sainsbury's store. The following points were made.

- It was clear that there was a desire of jobs. Job opportunities would be 'on-line', possibly within 2 to 3 weeks, and letters would also be sent to the residents located near to the new development. There would also be an announcement to the press and Ward Councillors would be informed.
- Existing staff at the Belgrave Road store would have opportunities to move to the new Melton Road store or to other Sainsbury's stores.

Sainsbury's offered to hold a separate recruitment meeting to explain the situation. This could be held within the next 3 or 4 weeks to start off the recruitment process. The Chair advised that Sainsbury's could use the Rushey Mead Recreation Centre for such a meeting.

98. UPDATE ON HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Ravi Mohankumar, from Leicester City Council, Transport Strategy was present to provide an update on local highway issues relating to the new Sainsbury's development. Ravi made the following points:

- Re-surfacing work at the Troon Way junction by the new store would be carried out during the October half term.
- It was anticipated that the highways work would be completed by the end of November 2013. This would result in the following:
 - 1) improved junction capacity, pedestrian, cycling, traffic signal and street lighting facilities;
 - 2) a left turn slip lane from Melton Road to Troon Way; and
 - 3) Nicklaus Road / Gleneagles Avenue / Troon Way junction would also be improved as part of the scheme. Troon Way would have two straight ahead lanes and one right turn lane on both directions.

An attendee expressed concern that at the Gleneagles Avenue/ Troon Way/ Nicklaus Road junction, the safety of children who were trying to cross the road to get to and from school, was being compromised by the construction work. A request

was made for someone to be present to help the children cross the road safely. Ravi responded that he would raise this concern with the Road Safety and other associated officers.

Concerns about the traffic lights at the top of Lanesborough Road were also raised, as a view was expressed that they appeared to be causing problems rather than improving the traffic situation there. Ravi responded that he would also report this concern back to the relevant officer. An attendee re-iterated concerns and requested that prompt action be taken.

99. HOUSING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET

John Thomson, Area Manager, Housing introduced himself and explained that he had come to the meeting to talk about future planning and spending within the housing environmental improvement budget for 2014. Generally, housing officers sought the views of tenants, residents' associations and people who lived near council estates as to suggestions for projects and improvements that were needed.

An attendee reported a problem with litter around the footpath and just behind the fencing near to the Dunblane Children's home: this problem was directed to the city warden.

Members of the community were asked to forward any suggestions for improvements to John or other housing officers. Alternatively, they were asked to inform any of their friends or family who lived in council housing in the Rushey Mead ward, about the environmental improvement budget. Suggestions for improvements would be considered and a list of priorities drawn up and submitted to Assistant City Mayor for Housing.

An attendee reported that one of the lights in the recreation's centre's car park was not working and John agreed to investigate this.

100. LOCAL POLICING ISSUES

Police Constable James Thomas and Police Inspector Ed McBryde-Wilding were present to provide an update on policing issues in the Rushey Mead ward. The following points were made:

- There had been 5 incidences of theft from people in the Peebles Way / Wyvern Avenue area. People were asked to be careful and to avoid having jewellery on show.
- There had been problems with burglaries around Lanesborough Road and PC Thomas had spent some time walking around the area, shutting ground floor windows of houses where occupiers had left them open.
- There had been a number of thefts from motor vehicles and members of the community were asked not to leave valuables on show.

- There was good news in relation to the previous parking problems at Watermead Park/ Alderton Close. The overflow car park at Watermead was now open and subsequently there had been very few complaints about parking. Thanks were given to Jane Ushwell, Senior Parks' Officer for her efforts to resolve this issue.
- In respect of the police station on Melton Road, a decision had been made that the station would close in April 2014, due to very low usage. Currently only about one member of the public called in to the station each day. The nearest police station would be on Keyham Lane and it was anticipated that there would also be a team based at Belgrave Road Neighbourhood Centre as well as a police office at Soar Valley College. Members of the public were assured that the local team would be unaffected by the closure of the Melton Road police station.
- At Diwali time, there would be additional officers patrolling; however people were asked to take precautions by closing windows and using automatic lights. Help with window alarms could be given to elderly or vulnerable people.
- Members of the community were reminded that if they had concerns they could telephone 101 or if a crime was in progress, they should telephone 999.

101. CITY WARDEN UPDATE

Jethro Swift addressed the meeting and explained that he and Mo Patel were the city wardens for the Rushey Mead and Belgrave and Latimer wards. Jethro made the following points:

- The city wardens had recently received additional powers, including responsibilities relating to skips and scaffolding.
- They had been tackling littering and fly tipping issues on the Thurmaston footpath, and had been working with local companies there.
- Work was still on-going in relation to the request for planters by the shops on Nicklaus Road. It was hoped that the Community Pay Back team and pupils at a local school would be able to help with this.
- The wardens were monitoring litter by the Lockerbie shops.

An attendee reported that there was an unpleasant aroma emanating from the footpath area under the railway bridge between Peebles Way and Barkby Road. It was reported that this land was part railway / part industrial land.

An attendee commented that he had seen a member of the public feeding a very large quantity of bread to the geese and birds on Watermead Park. Jane Ushwell, the Senior Parks' Officer responded that a campaign had been in operation on the park to tackle the overfeeding of birds there and at least 5 people had received fixed

penalty notices for excessive bird feeding. Jane added that because of the budget cuts, it was not possible to patrol the park at the weekend, but the campaign was still on-going.

102. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

The Chair presented the community meeting budget. Attendees heard that the councillors hoped that this budget would be used to generally improve the ward.

The following applications were considered:

2883: Summer Playscheme / Activities Sessions submitted by Mr Vijay Patel.

£460 requested.

Councillors agreed to support the funding application, but advised the applicant to seek alternative funding streams in the future. They wanted the community meeting budget to be used for projects to improve the ward, rather than to continue to support local groups and sporting events.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application for the Summer playscheme/ activity sessions be supported in full to the value of £460

2885 Bulk Bulb Planting Appleton Park, submitted by Jane Ushwell on behalf of the Appleton Park User Group.

£1400 requested.

Jane Ushwell presented the funding application and explained that Appleton Park was very valuable to the local community. The park contained very rare plant species, unusual wildlife and had a very successful User Group. However, the park lacked colour and it was hoped to plant almost 38000 daffodil and crocus bulbs; this would provide a huge avenue of colour as well as early food for bees and butterflies.

A member of the Appleton Park User Group added that the park was popular and enjoyed by many families and any measures taken to improve the park would benefit the local people.

Jane added that people were welcome to come along to join the User Group and as training was provided, there was an opportunity to learn new skills.

RESOLVED:

that the application for bulk bulb planting in Appleton Park be supported in full to the value of £1400

2886 Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre Social Club (LOPC) submitted by Ed Sibson, Manager.

£4320 requested.

There was no representative present from the LOPC. The Chair explained that councillors had sought information from the applicant as to how many people from the club came from Rushey Mead but this information had not been provided. The councillors considered that under the circumstances, it would not be prudent to support the funding application, as they wanted to ensure that money from the Rushey Mead Community Meeting Budget, was being used to benefit people from the ward.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application for the Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Club be unsupported.

The following two applications (Ref 2887 and 2889) were for funding for rent of the recreation centre for group meetings and funding towards social events such as day trips, lunches and festivals. Councillors agreed to fund 50% of the rental costs, which would pay for the rent up to the end of the current financial year and the applicants were asked to be self-sufficient after that. Councillors added that the budget could not fund rent for the following financial year and funding towards social events would not be supported as they considered that such activities should be paid for by the group members themselves.

2887 Rushey Mead Bhajan Sandhia Recreational Activities, submitted by Mr B Panchli, Chairman, Rushey Mead Bhajan Sandhia

£3218.40 requested

RESOLVED:

that the funding application for the Rushey Mead Bhajan Sandhia Recreational Activities be partially supported to the value of £109.20 for the reasons stated above.

2889 Yoga and Recreational Activities; Rushey Mead Mahila Yoga Mandal, submitted by Mrs Jaya Shah.

£3518.40 requested.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application for Yoga and Recreational Activities be partially supported to the value of £109.20 for the reasons stated above.

2888 To pay rental charges at Rushey Mead Recreation Centre submitted by the Rushey Mead Milap Group.

£2074.80 requested.

Councillors agreed to support 50% of the rental costs up to the end of the financial year and the applicant was asked to be self-sufficient in the future. Rental costs for the new financial year could not be supported.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application from the Rushey Mead Milap Group be partially supported to the value of £345.80

2890 Dance Workout, submitted by Lucy Bailey

£1000 requested.

Councillors agreed to support 50% of the amount requested and explained that they could not pay for any rental costs for the new financial year.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application for Dance Workout, be partially supported to the value of £500

2891 Arts and Crafts Workshop submitted by Smita Armstrong

£667.42 requested

Councillors agreed to support this funding application

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £667.42

2892 Shoot 2 the Future, submitted by the Leicester Basketball Developments CIC

£960 requested.

Funding was requested to enable the Shoot 2 the Future (a partnership project with Leicester Riders and Leicestershire Police) to continue to run sessions whilst alternative funding was sought. (Current funds for the project had run out).

Councillors explained that the application had been submitted extremely late. One of the main criteria for funding was how many people from the Rushey Mead Ward participated in the project and when applications were submitted very late, there was insufficient time for check the bid properly and to ascertain how many users from the ward would benefit. They were therefore not able to support the funding application but suggested that the applicant liaised with the Sports Development Council to see if they could help.

RESOLVED:

that the application for Shoot 2 the Future be unsupported.

103. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members of the community were asked to note the dates of future meetings, as detailed in the agenda:

Thursday 9 January 2014 at 6.30 pm. The venue to be confirmed.

Thursday 6 March 2014 at 6.30 pm at Soar Valley College, Gleneagles Avenue.

104. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A member of the community commented that she had previously asked whether the First Bus, Route 21 service could be restored to the Nicklaus Road area of Rushey Mead. The Chair responded that the buses were run by private companies, and those companies would not operate unprofitable bus routes. Because of the budgetary cuts, the council had also had to cut the subsidies that they gave to the bus companies. The council themselves had no control over the running of the buses.

105. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.