

Freemen Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Wednesday, 4 March 2009

Held at: Marriott Primary School, Marriott Road

Who was there:

Councillor Dale Keeling

Councillor Bill Shelton (Chair)

INFORMATION SHARING – ‘CAROUSEL’ 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 the local Police and to bring enquiries and raise and issues.

Ward Councillors

Members of the public were able to talk to their local councillors.

Community Safety

Information and advice on a variety of community safety issues was available.

Saffron Arts

Kellie Bugby from Saffron Arts displayed a range of the work created by users and explained the service offered.

Linwood Centre

Priten Pancholi from the Linwood Centre explained the services available at the Linwood Centre.

Saffron Fete

Photographs from last year’s Saffron Fete were on display.

LINK

John Davies was present with information on the work of the LINK in scrutinising health services, and how to be involved.

Police

Local police officers were present to discuss issues individually with residents.

Environmental Services and City Wardens

Barbara Whitcombe, Jessica Phillips and Maria Mahmood from the City Wardens team were present to explain their work and listen to residents’ concerns about the ward.

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.

30. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Shelton was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from Councillors.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

With regard to the budget applications for the Saffron Fete, Councillor Shelton declared that both he and Councillor Keeling were members of the Saffron Fete Committee, and Councillor Shelton was Chair of their meetings. He noted that normally in these circumstances a Councillor would leave the room during consideration of such items. However, as neither Councilor would personally benefit financially, it would be in the public interest if they stayed in the meeting. This was because they felt that anyone who knew all the relevant facts would agree that the Councillors were able to make an impartial decision, and had the best interests of the ward in mind. Members of the public agreed that they were happy for Councillors to remain in the meeting and vote on the applications.

33. RECORD OF LAST MEETING

The record of the Freeman Community Meeting, held on 3 December 2008 was agreed as correct.

34. COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

Sue Taylor, Manager of the Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC), gave an outline of the organisation's work. She explained that it offered advice to City residents and covered, among other things, advice on debt, law, benefits, housing, citizens' advice, welfare, community care and employment. She stated that it had been based in Charles Street since May 2008. She said that CLAC offered a full time service, 9.30-5 Monday to Friday, except Thursday which was 9-9, and 9-12 Saturday. There was a lift, so it was easy to access. The phone number was 2426720.

Sue explained that an outreach service was held on Thursday mornings in the Saffron Resource Centre, as the Saffron area was one of the service's priority areas.

35. CITY WARDENS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES UPDATE

Barbara Whitcombe, City Wardens Manager, and Jessica Phillips and Maria Mahmood, City Wardens were present to give an update on their work and the work of Environmental Services in the ward over the last six months.

Barbara gave a presentation and handed out a newsletter that showed achievements and comparisons between the Freeman ward against the rest of the city. This covered a wide range of services, including graffiti, flyposting litter, nuisance dogs, flytipping, licensing, abandoned vehicles, overpainted cable boxes and pest control.

Jessica gave an update on what she had been doing in the ward in addition to dealing with the issues listed above, such as patrols, talking to people face to face, dealing with fly tipping, ensuring businesses adhered to their responsibilities, and reducing the number of bins on streets. She said that she was able to deal with dog fouling through fixed penalty notices, but that she had to catch the offenders in the act. She also said that regular fly-posters were being prosecuted. She had also had success in encouraging premises to clear up dumped rubbish.

Jessica asked for the public's help in identifying offenders, as she relied on them to tell her about problems they were experiencing. No issue was too trivial for the wardens to deal with. They could do this by calling the Council's "One Contact" number, 2527001.

The meeting was informed that Jessica had been temporarily promoted and that Maria Mahmood would be taking her place in the ward.

Members of the public asked the following questions and they were answered as below:

- 1) *Is there a statutory number of litter bins that the Council is obliged to provide? Adjacent to the shops on the Fairway there used to be two bins, one of which was set on fire and never replaced. The one remaining bin is often overflowing and I have to pick up rubbish.*

There is no statutory obligation to provide bins on streets. The warden can look at changing the emptying schedule if it is getting too full, but shops are also responsible for keeping the area clean outside their premises. The warden can challenge them on this if you let her know where problems are.

- 2) *I've called out the graffiti team on numerous occasions to clear graffiti off my wall. There is also graffiti high up on the gable end of the shops on the Fairway that is not being cleaned. Why can't other premises clear their graffiti? They are probably discouraged by having to pay.*

The Council can't clear graffiti without the premises owner's consent, as it may damage the surface. Legislation is in the pipeline to make it easier for us to insist that it is cleaned. Prevention is better than cure, and we need to find ways of reducing graffiti, maybe by using covert cameras.

- 3) *A fence at the back of my property was vandalised five times with spare broken slabs that had been left lying around. I asked the Council to remove them and I put them at the front of my property for them to collect. They were left there for two weeks, by which time one had been thrown through my window.*

Councillor Shelton agreed to follow this up for the resident.

Councillor Shelton thanked the officers and said to the meeting that this was still a new service that currently had limitations in what they could do. However, more legislation would help them in future to deal with problems that particularly affected residents. Barbara said that it was important for residents to let them know of any incidents or problems, as the more they received, the greater case they would have in bringing in legislation that would help.

36. POLICE UPDATE

Members of the local policing team were present to give a brief update on work in the ward. They explained that the team worked with other local agencies to tackle issues, and individual officers dealt with specific areas, namely Saffron, Aylestone and Freeman Commercial.

It was reported that newsletters were being distributed in the area that outlined the neighbourhood priorities that had been identified by consulting with residents. These included reducing graffiti between Marriott Road and North End Close, dealing with underage street drinking and antisocial behaviour, particularly on Southfields Drive, Stonesby Avenue, "The Square" in Aylestone (Clifton Road, Saffron Lane, Cavendish Road, New Park Road) and Montrose Road park.

Priorities were being tackled by a system called "EPIC" – enforcement, prevention, intelligence and consultation. Enforcement was carried out not only by the police, but also city wardens, licensing officers, park wardens etc. Prevention involved measures such as lighting, gates, alarms and work in the community such as school visits. Intelligence was gathered by people in the area telling them of problems, either directly or through the Crimestoppers number. Consultation took place in a variety of ways, including at meetings like this, where police would find out what the public thought of the service.

The meeting was informed of how to contact the police as follows:

- 1) Call 222 2222, extension 9082
- 2) Voice mail – leave a message on 248 5675
- 3) Website – www.leics.police.uk
- 4) Call in to Welford Road Local Policing Unit
- 5) Crimestoppers – a way to anonymously report – 0800 555111
- 6) Speak to officers on the beat.

Councillor Keeling asked if spot checks were done on alcohol retailers to identify sales to underage drinkers. Officers confirmed that, as part of the Challenge 21 campaign, all premises had been visited and made aware of responsibilities. Any premises that were suspected of underage sales were being followed up. Test

purchases were also carried out. The meeting discussed “naming and shaming” offending premises and it was noted that the Mercury had recently run such an article.

Councillor Shelton thanked the officers for their presentation.

37. WARD ACTION PLAN

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer, gave a verbal update of the Ward Action Plan, stating that the main issues that had been identified at previous meetings were graffiti and antisocial behaviour on the former velodrome site. He reported that, since the action plan was produced, the velodrome had been demolished, which reduced associated problems.

Jerry said that the meeting had a sum allocated to address issues in the ward, but also a large sum of money was spent through other Council areas of work, such as environmental services and the City Wardens and money spent on schools. Jerry suggested that the sum of money allocated for the meeting to spend could be focused on issues such as youth engagement, reducing antisocial behaviour and community cohesion. He also suggested that the funding for the next financial year could be focused on traffic issues. Consultation on traffic would start at the next meeting.

A member of the public stated that they had not seen a copy of the Ward Action Plan, and therefore felt that the community had not been involved sufficiently and had not approved this. Jerry explained that the plan had been formed from consultation at the first meeting, where the priorities had been identified by the residents who were present. The resulting plan had been presented to a subsequent meeting. He offered to send a copy to anyone who had not been at these meetings and not seen it. It would also be resubmitted to the next meeting.

38. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGETS

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer introduced applications for funding from the Community Meeting budgets.

With regard to the bids for the Saffron Fete, Jerry explained that the ward was recommended to support the contribution of 70% of the cost, as the Eyres Monsell Community Meeting had agreed to support funding of 30%.

An additional bid was presented at the meeting for environmental improvements. This was also considered by the meeting. Consideration of a further bid from the Ministry of Food was postponed in order to obtain further information.

The meeting agreed to support the bids as follows:

- 1) Aylestone Park Residents' Group – funding for updated ecological survey*

To establish biodiversity changes to the site of St Mary's with a view to comparing results with those of a previous survey undertaken several years ago.

AGREED: £350 to be funded from the Ward Community Fund.

2) *Police & Community Support Group – “100% Best Attendance”*

To encourage school attendance by awarding a trip to the Odeon Cinema

AGREED: £350 to be funded from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund.

3) *Saffron Arts Forum – Carnival Procession*

For policing and professional traffic management to ensure safety and that the procession runs according to law, as last year's procession was larger than expected.

AGREED: £2,000 to be funded from the Ward Community Fund.

4) *Saffron Fete Committee/Saffron Community Enterprises Ltd*

Fairground ride, additional insurance & professional stewards

AGREED: 70% of the total cost of £1700, to be funded from the Ward Community Cohesion fund.

5) *Kingfisher Youth Centre – Kingfisher Clear-Up*

To engage with local young people and partners and to clear the areas that is to be developed as an FA pitch.

AGREED: £400 to be funded from the Ward Action Plan Budget.

6) *Saffron Young People's Project – Youth Street Crime Awareness Project*

To develop a musical in the community.

AGREED: £2,500 contribution towards the £2950, to be funded from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund.

7) *Saffron Fete Committee/Saffron Community Enterprises Ltd*

Various items including first aid, van and equipment hire, mobile toilets, administration and advertising

AGREED: 70% of the total cost of £1400, to be funded from the Ward Community fund.

8) *Welford Road Local Policing Unit – “Delivering Service Excellence”*

Award scheme – a monthly award of a £20 voucher to anyone who works with or for the Welford Road Local Policing Unit and its area.

AGREED: £50.00 to be funded from the Ward Action Plan budget.

9) *Environmental Improvements*

To carry out works identified by the Environment Team and City Warden to deal flexibly with issues that arise such as graffiti, littering, fly tipping, installation of bins.

Councillor Shelton asked that issues at St Mary's Allotments be addressed by this fund.

AGREED: £1700 to be funded from the Ward Action plan budget, and that part of it should be used towards addressing issues at St Mary's Allotments.

39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 10 June 2009 at 6pm, venue to be confirmed.

Councillor Shelton stated that he had asked officers to try to identify if there were any suitable venues in the Welford Road side of the ward for some future meetings.

40. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 1) Leon Charikar from Leicester City Primary Care Trust (PCT) informed the meeting that he had a range of information available on how to be involved with the NHS. He also had information on NHS Direct and other issues, such as when it was appropriate to call an ambulance, and cervical screening. For further information, people could also call him on 2951400.
- 2) A member of the public stated that there was a regular flooding problem under the railway bridge on Aylestone Road and asked if this was being dealt with. Councillors were not aware of the problem and thanked the person for raising the issue.
- 3) A member of the public said that the road markings where Aylestone Road and Saffron Lane meet needed to be redone, as when the road was wet, people could not see them.
- 4) Councillor Shelton informed the meeting that the Saffron Fete was to be held on 15 August 2009 at 11am. The Lord Mayor had been confirmed to attend.

41. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.52pm.