

Thurncourt Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 25 January 2010

Held at: Christ Church Hall, Thurncourt Road

Councillors in attendance:

Councillor John Allen

Councillor Caroline Scuplak

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.
Housing Capital Receipts Projects Information on progress with the kerb widening schemes in the ward	Housing Benefits Information and advice on housing benefits
Welfare Rights Information and advice on welfare rights issues	

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.

25. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Scuplak was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Jenny and Roger Hopewell, Wendy Biddles and Steve Fall.

27. 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.

Councillor Scuplak declared a personal interest in the application for the PC Suite at the Community Centre, as she was Chair of the Community Association Management Committee. She stated that she would not express an opinion on the application.

Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in the application for the PC Suite at the Community Centre, as he was Secretary of the Community Association Management Committee. He stated that he would not express an opinion on the application.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Thurncourt Community Meeting, held on 26 October 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

29. CLOCKWISE CREDIT UNION

It was reported that this item was to be deferred to a future meeting.

30. STREET CLEANSING

This item was taken out of order with the agreement of the Chair.

Marie Tobitt, Area Service Manager, Cleansing Services, and Mark Porter, Refuse & Community Recycling Manager from BIFFA were present to discuss street cleansing and bin collection issues that were raised at the last meeting.

Marie explained that the main concern was street cleaning not co-inciding with refuse collection and the mess that was left. She explained that it was not possible to schedule all streets to be cleaned after collections due to the differences in shifts and areas covered. Biffa did not work on Mondays or in commercial areas. Some areas were cleaned weekly, such as shop fronts.

Mark explained that bin rounds were regularly checked, but if instances of a mess being left were noticed, residents should call the Council Customer Contact Centre.

BIFFA would have to deal with the complaint within 24 hours. The current average response time was 1 hour 20 minutes. Residents were advised to use nets on the recycling boxes.

In response to residents' queries, Mark stated that operators were instructed to return bins to where they were left. A recent initiative was to withhold bonuses from officers who did not do this. He informed the meeting that replacement bins and nets could be ordered from the Council's Customer Contact Centre. Catalogues and Yellow pages could now be recycled through the green boxes. Residents asked for all of this information to be put into the residents' newsletter.

In response to a query raised at the last meeting about fallen fruit on the pavement outside Thurnby Lodge School, Marie said that it was cleared once a week. If it was felt to be a specific risk, residents could call the Contact Centre. She also reminded residents of the bulk collection service. Following previous queries, Marie reported that dog waste bins had been installed in additional locations in the ward.

The Chair thanked Marie and Mark for their information and advice.

31. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Ravi Mohankumar, Team Leader - Traffic Impact Team, discussed issues that had been raised at previous meetings regarding road safety measures and highways issues.

Issues raised at the last meeting were discussed as follows:

- Roads outside schools were placed on the traffic calming priority list based on mainly on accidents. This list was regularly reviewed.
- Speed surveys could be carried out on streets that residents felt had a speed problem.
- The bus route and bus stop issues on Bowhill Grove were being investigated. Councillor Scuplak stated that a bid for funding to prepare a traffic regulation order was to be considered later on in the meeting, which could alleviate problems of dangerous parking near the roundabout.
- An agreement had been reached with developers to install traffic calming on Nursery Road, as per the planning requirements for the new development. This should be completed shortly. Councillor Allen outlined the efforts he had made since 2004 to resolve this issue. Councillor Scuplak asked Ravi to investigate why this situation had been allowed to continue, and for the Ward Councillors to be informed if the work was not to be completed by the end of March.
- An issue of parking across a resident's driveway on Nursery Road had been resolved to the resident's satisfaction.
- Amec had been instructed to reinstate pavements satisfactorily following complaints about poor work done on Scraftoft Lane and Uppingham Road.
- Parking issues outside schools had been monitored. No obstructions were spotted, and the extra traffic led to a reduction in speed, which, in itself, was a safety measure. A campaign was being introduced in schools, called, "Don't be a school gate parker." Residents stated that parents' parking was causing

problems for the health centre users. It was reported that PCSOs would monitor this.

- The issue of moving unused bus shelters to Colchester Road and the top of Bowhill Grove would be raised by Ravi with the Public Transport Officer, as they had not been done yet.

32. UPDATE ON HOUSING ISSUES IN THURNCOURT

Neil Rouse, Neighbourhood Housing Manager, gave an update on housing issues in the ward.

He reported that work had started on the first of the carriageway widening projects that had been described at previous meetings. These were being funded over the next two years by the Housing Capital Receipts scheme. It was felt that this work would be of significant benefit to the ward. Photographs were available of the work done.

Neil gave an update on progress with the residents' consultation on grass cutting at the bottom of Ross Hill Crescent/ Cross Keys Green. At the last meeting, it was agreed that residents be given the opportunity to decide whether to have this area reinstated on the cutting schedule. Following this consultation, the area was to be cut regularly.

Neil explained that derelict garages on Wreford Crescent had been replaced by 12 affordable houses. It was agreed that this new development was welcome and enhanced the area. Concern was expressed that there was no path from the houses and visibility was poor. Neil explained that, if it was considered to be a danger, it would have been addressed by planning conditions before the build started.

33. POLICING IN THURNCOURT

Sergeant Kooldip Johal gave an update on policing issues in the ward.

He explained that the ward had a low crime rate and the aim was to maintain this. In response to residents' concerns, he assured them that staffing levels would not be affected by the crime rates in the foreseeable future. He also explained that the perceived high turnover of staff was due to officers moving on to gain different experience.

34. THURNCOURT WARD ACTION PLAN

Francis Connolly, Members' Support Officer, circulated a draft updated version of the Ward Action Plan, and explained what had been done to tackle each priority.

Among measures to tackle illegal parking, it was noted that a residents' parking scheme would not be appropriate for the ward, as it would reduce the number of available spaces. It was felt that this priority should be widened to include irresponsible and inconsiderate parking

Work to address pavement issues included the carriageway-widening scheme. It was agreed that the poor condition of pavements was still a priority, and that it should be widened to include roads.

Litter issues had been addressed at Community Meetings, and was part of the Environmental Services theme in 2008-9. Barbara Whitcombe, City Wardens Manager, informed the meeting that a Warden was to be appointed in April, and they would deal with a range of environmental issues, including litter. Residents were encouraged to identify issues to be looked at by the new Warden. Issues raised included obstructive parking (which was a police matter), dog fouling on Sextant Road, Compass Road and Barbara Avenue, and litter from takeaways.

Grass cutting had been considered at this, and previous, meetings. Residents were to continue to identify areas of concern.

Several discussions had been held regarding young people's activities, and this would continue to be a major focus next municipal year. Actions had been identified to improve the situation. Concern was raised that activities were not publicised well enough.

A suggestion was made that the Ward Action Plan should be redesigned around the following issues: employment and training, environmental improvement, transport, youth provision, and crime and disorder. It was agreed that consideration would be given to how these could be incorporated in the Plan. The Chair recommended that the existing headings be retained so that it was clear who would deal with each issue. A revised document would be prepared for agreement at the next meeting.

ACTION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	BY WHEN
Prepare a further draft of the Ward Action Plan	Francis Connolly	Next meeting

35. BUDGET

Francis Connolly, Members' Support Officer, gave an update on the current position of the Community Meeting Budgets and introduced applications for funding that had been received.

The meeting discussed an application that was mentioned at the last meeting for bulbs and shrubs for Willowbrook Park. It was noted that no decision could be made at that meeting, as no details had been submitted. However, due to the need to plant bulbs in November, an urgent decision had been made by Councillors after the meeting to fund £500 towards bulbs. At the time of purchase, there were few bulbs left, so the remainder of the funding would be used for planting some shrubs in the spring.

It was noted that there was £4500 remaining across the budgets and applications were discussed as follows:

Bowhill Grove/Thurncourt Road Waiting Restrictions

Councillor Scuplak stated that this application was a result of many discussions at previous meetings. As it was not classed as a priority, it would be several years before the work was done by the Council. However, if the meeting funded it, the work could be done very soon. She and Councillor Allen stated that it was unfortunate that this was the only way the work would be done, but it would be of significant benefit to the community.

The meeting was informed that a large proportion of the money was required for legal work and publicity of the Traffic Regulation Order. Residents stressed the importance of getting the markings in the right place, and suggestions were welcomed. Residents fully supported the application, in the light of the significant benefit it would have.

AGREED: that the meeting supports the funding of £2,500 from the Community Meeting budgets.

Christ Church Church Hall plans for refurbishment/ Thurnby Lodge Computer Suite

These applications were discussed at the same time, due to there being insufficient remaining funds for both. It was noted that the application for the computer suite had been submitted immediately prior to the meeting. It was for three PCs at a cost of £1,000.

Councillors Allen and Scuplak did not express an opinion regarding the PC Suite application, due to their positions on the Community Association.

Francis stated that the Church was asking for £1,675 for redecoration of the hall, and it was noted that the church had been recommended to resubmit this bid towards the end of the financial year. Mrs Worley from Christ Church explained that the Church had several projects to do and funding had been obtained for some of them. Concern was raised that there was little detail in the application, but the meeting was assured that receipts were required for the work. It was suggested, but considered inappropriate for a condition to be put on the funding that the Council could use the hall.

The meeting discussed the application for 3 PCs, noting how beneficial the computer suite was, and Allan Gratrix reported on the need to replace very old PCs.

Following consideration of options to part-fund each application, the meeting agreed on funding two PCs for the Computer Suite and the remainder of the funding to be allocated to the Church hall decoration.

AGREED: that the meeting supports the funding of two PCs at £666 and a contribution towards the Church hall decoration of £1,264 from the Community Meeting budgets.

36. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.