

# Freemen Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Wednesday, 16 March 2011**  
**Held at: Knighton Fields Primary School, Knighton Fields Road**  
**West**

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Bill Shelton
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## 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><b>Ward Councillors and General Information</b></p> <p>Members of the public could talk to one of their local Ward Councillors and raise general enquiries.</p>	<p><b>Police Issues</b></p> <p>PS Darren Little and PCSO Lindsay Bones were present to answer questions relating to local policing issues</p>
<p><b>Stop Smoking Campaign</b></p> <p>Noreen Gallagher, a ‘Stop Smoking Nurse’ was present to offer advice to members of the public.</p>	<p><b>Wheatsheaf Works Planning Application</b></p> <p>Members of the public could talk to Santokh Bansal, Senior Planner, Leicester City Council about the Wheatsheaf Works Planning Application.</p>
<p><b>City Warden</b></p> <p>Scott Clarke, the City Warden for the Freeman Ward and Barbara Whitcombe, Team Manager, City Wardens were present to give information and answer questions relating environmental issues and the City Warden scheme.</p>	<p><b>Saffron Acres</b></p> <p>Sarah Fields was present to talk to residents about the community allotment project.</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.

#### **40. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Bill Shelton, as Chair welcomed everyone to the Freeman Community Meeting.

#### **41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dale Keeling who was attending another Council meeting at the Town Hall.

#### **42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they had in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate whether Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Bill Shelton declared that in respect of the Community Meeting Budget, a funding application had been received from the Saffron Fete Community, and that he was Chair of the committee but would personally receive no financial benefit from the funding application.

#### **43. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Freeman Community Meeting held on 24 November 2010, be agreed as a correct record.

#### **44. WHEATSHEAF WORKS PLANNING APPLICATION**

Santokh Bansal, Senior Planner was present at the meeting to provide an update on the Wheatsheaf Works Planning Application and he explained that the application would be considered at a meeting of the Planning and Development Control on Monday 21 March 2011.

Councillor Shelton explained that he was a member of the Planning and Development Control Committee, and as such he would not be able to give any answers or comments on the application, which might prejudice him at the planning meeting and therefore prevent him from sitting on the Committee.

Santokh made the following points:

- The Wheatsheaf Works was a listed building which had been lying vacant for a number of years, and was in a deteriorating condition.
- The proposal was for 172 units of accommodation, 173 car park spaces plus 176 cycle spaces.

- There had been 17 objections; most of which related to a lack of parking.
- A financial appraisal had been submitted and it had been agreed that the developers would provide a contribution towards open space. However, the financial appraisal indicated that profits would be relatively small and there would not be sufficient money generated from the proposal to make a contribution towards education.
- Planning Officers had recommended approval for the scheme; however some highway works would be required in order to slow down traffic.
- One of the key considerations had been the state of the Wheatsheaf Works and the length of time the building had been out of use. It had been difficult to find anyone interested in taking on the Wheatsheaf as it was expensive to develop listed buildings.
- The work on the site would be carried out in five phases, with the work on the listed building to be carried out in the final phase, because it would be financed from the earlier work.

Members of the community were invited to ask Santokh questions and the following queries/comments were raised:

- I live near here and there have been building works taking place for at least 6 years. There are already lots of cars and at times we cannot get into our street. Does anyone from Planning have a look at the site before plans are agreed?

*Santokh responded that Planning Officers did go out and visit sites. In respect of this application, he had been out on several occasions and put up site applications, notices and had delivered letters.*

Several members of the community commented that they had not seen any notices and had not received letters relating to the planning application.

- What was the timescale for the development?

*Santokh replied that the developer would need to start within 3 years.*

- When will the work on the listed building in phase 5 be carried out, and what if the developers stop at phase 4 before any work is carried out on the Wheatsheaf?

*Santokh explained that the Planning Authority had made very effort to ensure that the work on the Wheatsheaf would be carried out, but it was understood that the developer needed to progress some of the new build first in order to generate the required income.*

- Why will there be so many units?

*Santokh responded that proposed site would be densely populated as the developer would not be interested unless the development was profitable. He added that the current developer was the only one who had shown any interest in the Wheatsheaf.*

- What about the fact that there are already unoccupied properties in the area?

*Santokh explained that this was not a planning consideration.*

- It was mentioned that traffic will be slowed down. How will this be done?

*Santokh responded that road humps would be installed in the latter stages of the development. There was no point in installing them too early as they would be flattened by the construction traffic.*

- What about access to the site? We already have large vehicles driving down Wordsworth Road and wing mirrors get knocked as the road layout is unsuitable for large vehicles. This will get worse with the extra construction traffic.

*Santokh explained that the Highways Officers would need to look at this; he was not able to comment as he was not a Highways expert.*

A member of the public commented that as traffic was such a crucial issue, a Highways Officer should have been present at the meeting and Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer explained that on this occasion, the Highways Officer had not been invited. However at the previous Freeman Community Meeting, there had been a detailed presentation and discussion on the Wheatsheaf Planning Application and comprehensive minutes had been taken, which people may find informative. Paper copies of the minutes were circulated to some members of the public and Jerry also offered to email the minutes out to people after the meeting.

- A further planning application for 47 student flats at the Manchester Hotel had also been submitted. This was adjacent to the Wheatsheaf and was therefore germane to the development there.

*Councillor Shelton responded that the planning application for the Manchester Hotel would be considered at the Planning and Development Control Committee on 13 April 2011. He added that he was opposed to the application and would be speaking against it, which meant that he would not be able to participate or vote as a member of the committee at the meeting.*

Santokh was thanked for coming to the meeting.

#### **45. CITY WARDEN & ONE CLEAN LEICESTER CAMPAIGN**

Scott Clarke, the City Warden for the Freeman Ward and Barbara Whitcombe, Team Manager for the City Wardens were introduced to the community meeting. Barbara gave an introduction to the new 'One Clean Leicester Campaign' and explained that there was a new alternative method of reporting environmental problems such as litter, graffiti etc by sending messages via Blackberrys, I phones etc.

Photographs could also be sent and, if appropriate, they would be published onto Leicester City Council's website. Once received, the complaint would be allocated to the appropriate team and the sender of the message would receive an acknowledgement. The sender would also receive confirmation when the complaint had been resolved.

Barbara added that complaints and problems could still be reported in the usual ways, but the new scheme enabled complaints to be dealt with more quickly. A photograph of the problem in question could save time, because it could help ensure that the most appropriate response was given.

Members of the public were asked to let the City Wardens know of any problems and reminded that they could still use the traditional methods of reporting environmental problems.

#### **46. POLICING PRIORITIES UPDATE**

Police Sergeant Darren Little was introduced to the meeting and gave a brief update on policing in the Freeman Ward. Sergeant Little stated that crime in the Ward was reducing and this was due not only to the work of the police, but also due to the work of their partners as well.

The Police priority was still anti-social behaviour; particularly on Marriot Road and at the Pork Pie Library. The Police were working with their partners (including Housing) and anti-social behaviour had been reduced. 20 individuals had been identified; all had either been visited or had been sent warning letters. PS Little stated that there were no other priorities and he gave credit to the team for that.

Members of the community were invited to ask questions and the following comments were made:

- There was a concern that crime would increase if there was a higher level of unemployment.

*PS Little responded that there could potentially be an increase in crime and the Police would need to be alert.*

- How many Police were on duty at night?

*PS Little replied that resources and demand were considered when allocating staffing duties. There were a considerable number of Police on duty at night, but they may not be seen.*

- How many of the Police or civilian employees have been cut from the team?

*PS Little explained that there was a slight reduction in numbers and they were not recruiting new staff at the moment. However, the Chief Constable had stated that they would try to ensure that front line Policing would not be affected.*

PS Little reminded members of the community that crime statistics and Police priorities for the Freeman Ward could be viewed on the Leicestershire Constabulary website at:

[http://www.leics.police.uk/policing/8\\_city\\_bcu/20\\_welford\\_road/129\\_freemen/](http://www.leics.police.uk/policing/8_city_bcu/20_welford_road/129_freemen/)

#### **47. CITY COUNCIL BUDGET UPDATE**

Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer to the Freeman Community Meeting gave an update on the City Council budget. Jerry explained that the Government had brought in an interim budget and as a result there had been in-year cut of £7.7 million to the City Council budget. Jerry added that it was virtually unprecedented to have an in-year cut in the budget.

#### **Knighton Fields Centre**

A member of the community queried what would happen to the Knighton Fields Centre. Jerry responded that he had received an update on the Centre from the Head of Service, Learning Transformation and Development, which stated that it was possible that the current use of the Centre, as a base for the dance, drama and music service for children and young people in Leicestershire and Leicester would cease, but no definite decision had been made. The service was in the process of being restructured in line with funding decreases. The meeting heard that Leicestershire County Council had also made a decision to withdraw their funding from the Centre.

#### **48. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET 2010/11**

Jerry Connolly, the Member Support Officer for the Freeman Community Meeting presented the Community Meeting Budget and explained that there was some dispute with central finance over the balance of the budget. The figures from central finance indicated that there was an overspend on the budget, however the Member Support team had disputed this, as they believed that finance had counted in some funding applications twice. The issue was still being investigated, but as further funding applications had been received, these would still be considered with the hope that the dispute would be resolved.

Jerry presented the following budget applications and the Chair asked members of the community to indicate whether or not they were in support of the funding bid:

**Love Hoops Foundation: Active Women**

The Love Hoops Foundation had submitted a funding application for £250 for the Active Women programme, which offered basketball coaching and playing opportunities to disadvantaged women.

Jerry suggested that the funding bid be deferred to the new financial year and could be fast tracked, because £500 or less was being applied for.

RESOLVED:

that the application for £250 be supported but deferred to the new financial year 2011/12 and be considered under the fast track procedure at that point.

**Police and Community Support Group: 100% Best Attendance Project**

The Police and Community Support Group had submitted a funding application for £500 to improve attendance within primary schools on the Welford Road LPU area.

Jerry suggested that the funding bid be deferred to the new financial year and could be fast tracked, because £500 or less was being applied for.

RESOLVED:

that the application for £500 be supported and deferred to the new financial year 2011/12, and be considered under the fast track procedure at that point.

Jerry explained that the following funding applications were received after the agenda had been prepared:

**Linwood Centre Chairers and Carers Group: Pampers Day, Celebrating motherhood.**

A funding application for £300 had been submitted for an event to celebrate motherhood and parenting and which would also consider healthy eating and nutrition, raise awareness of health issues and promote the Linwood Centre. The event would be for local mums of all ages and would be held on 1 April 2011. The Eyres Monsell Community Meeting had agreed to fund £100 towards the event, and therefore £200 was requested from the Freeman Ward.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application for £200 be supported.

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

A funding application for £1400 had been submitted to stage the Saffron Fete on Aylestone Recreation Ground on 20 August 2011. The Eyres Monsell Community Meeting had agreed to fund £400 and Jerry recommended that the Freeman Community Meeting agree to support £600 towards the fete.

A member of the local community questioned whether the Aylestone Community Meeting had agreed to support the fete and the Chair explained that Aylestone had been approached in the past, but they had previously declined to support the funding bid and therefore they had not been approached this time.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of £600

*Post meeting note: After the meeting, this was subsequently amended to £545 which was the balance remaining in the Community Meeting Budget.*

Action to be taken	Officer identified	Deadline
That the funding applications. that had been supported be submitted to the Cabinet Lead for approval.	Jerry Connolly, Member Support Officer	31 March 2011

#### **49. CITY ELECTED MAYOR - INFORMATION SHARING**

The meeting heard that there would be a number of elections taking place on Thursday 5 May 2011, including elections for the new City Mayor and for Ward Councillors.

So far, Mayoral candidates for the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Parties had been announced and it was possible that other candidates might still be confirmed. Under the new system everyone who was entitled to vote would be given an opportunity to vote for the City Mayor, whereas with the current system, only Councillors in the majority party were given an opportunity to vote for the Council Leader.

The electorate would also be given an opportunity to vote on the Alternative Vote System, to indicate how they would wish to vote in future elections.

A member of the community explained that a meeting was being arranged at the Saffron Resource Centre on 22 April, for all the Mayoral Candidates to meet members of the public, and he requested that this be noted in the minutes.

A query was raised as to why the public were not given an opportunity to vote as to whether there should be a City Mayor in Leicester. Councillor Shelton responded that the issue had been debated in Council, where it had been decided that the elected councillors would vote on the issue.

## **50. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A member of the community drew the meeting's attention to the current situation at the Goldhill Adventure Playground on Saffron Lane, which although was located in the Eyres Monsell Ward, was used mostly by children in the Freeman Ward. He stated that the tendering process had been delayed and staff faced being issued with redundancy notices which would make it difficult for them to submit a tender.

Councillor Shelton stated that he felt that he spoke for Councillor Keeling and the Eyres Monsell Ward Councillors in saying that they would all want to offer their support to the playground.

## **51. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm