

# **Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Thursday, 23 June 2011**

**Held at: Medway Community Primary School, St. Stephens Road, Leicester.**

Who was there:

Councillor Lucy Chaplin
Councillor Iqbal Desai
Councillor Mustafa Kamal

Also in Attendance:

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Chaplin was elected Chair for the meeting.

## **2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and requested that phones were turned to silent.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they might have in the business on the agenda and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act applied to them.

No declarations of interest were made at this time.

## **4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Spinney Hills Police, due to a major incident that had occurred in Highfields.

## **5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Stoneygate Community Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011, as previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

The Chair stated that the City Mayor was looking to move forward with a new format of Community Meeting that would be more focused on local issues and meet more frequently.

## **6. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - HAMILTON STREET**

A resident of Hamilton Street spoke on this item and stated that she had lived in the area for a number of years and welcomed the diversity of the area. However, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was now becoming more prevalent in the area, particularly in Upper Tichborne, Skipworth and Hamilton Streets and generally in several other streets in the area. The ASB comprised vandalism generally, premises being broken into and business premises being damaged.

Discussion took place around which was the most appropriate agency to tackle the issues highlighted. It was stated that the Police would be the most appropriate in the first instance although it was stated that a lot of residents were frightened to report the perpetrators although it was stated that this could be done in confidence.

A member of the public stated that as well as ASB issues litter was an area of concern across the whole area. The City Warden present stated that efforts were being made to clear litter regularly and the Wardens were liaising with residents to address the issues.

A member of the public stated that she had recently had to have a CCTV system installed outside her business premises in an effort to identify the people responsible for depositing much of the litter, only 3 people had been prosecuted in a 11 month period for litter offences.

A member of the public stated that in his opinion litter was a relatively minor issue compared to violence and intimidation by youths that some residents were experiencing. Another resident stated that it was clear from regular meetings of the Evington Road Residents association that youths lacked access to facilities in the area to keep them off the streets.

A member of the public stated that drugs were readily available locally and it was not a case of youths not having anything to do but rather it was about the organised drugs trade in the City. The big dealers did not live locally but came to the area and paid local youths to undertake the distribution. It was stated that this was unfortunate but for those youths from disaffected households it was easier to become involved in such activities rather than find something else.

A member of the public stated that a number of people had attended this meeting to find out what the newly elected Councillors for Stoneygate Ward were going to do about the problems identified here at the meeting and during the Election campaign period.

Members stated that the Police would be contacted to respond to the many concerns raised around ASB and youths, as it was clearly within their remit. The City Wardens were aware of the litter problems and were in the process of addressing these problems. The aim was to alleviate resident's fears and try and tackle the problems raised.

In concluding the Chair stated that should local residents have any concerns then the local Ward Councillors should be contacted. There was a lot of work to be done but, by working together along with partner agencies, it was anticipated that the issues identified could be addressed.

RESOLVED:

that the various concerns be actioned as indicated.

## **7. EXPERIMENTAL RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME - STONEYGATE WARD**

Andy Thomas, Head of Traffic Management, Leicester City Council attended the meeting to outline the background leading up to the implementation of the experimental Residents Parking Scheme in the South Highfields Area. The scheme had been implemented under legal powers and the ability to amend the scheme

slightly. Five changes were about to be made to the scheme, advertised in the Leicester Mercury, to relate to schools , places of worship, businesses etc. As an experiment the City Council were looking to make the scheme work, if it did not work then the scheme would be removed.

A member of the public stated that, since the scheme had been brought in on Saxby Street the community had been partly destroyed, as some people were now finding it difficult to use the Community Centre, it was difficult for funerals to take place and businesses were suffering. Andy responded by stating that the City Council would endeavour to ensure that funerals etc. could take place as a 'smart card' system could be implemented.

A member of the public questioned on what basis the experimental scheme had been introduced and of the fact that residents were being expected to pay a £25 fee per vehicle in one of the most deprived areas of the City. Andy stated that the scheme had been implemented to ascertain whether residents, businesses etc. could make more effective use of the parking spaces available. Free passes would be introduced for the over 60's.

At this point in the meeting a number of local residents made it very clear that the experimental residents parking scheme was not wanted in the area.

The Chair stated that there were people who did not want the scheme but that the City Council were aware of those that did want the scheme.

The City Mayor, who attended the meeting for this item, stated that he was not at the meeting to defend the experimental scheme but that at the time the residents had been asked a majority had responded in favour of a scheme, compared to those that did not. In other areas of the City where Residents Parking had been introduced a majority of people had welcomed the schemes and had stated that they did not want the schemes removed.

The City Mayor gave an assurance that the experiment in the area would be monitored closely and that after a period of time the results would be reported back and, should the majority want the scheme removed then this would be removed. In the meantime the experiment would go ahead because that is what people wanted.

At this point a number of residents became very vocal and the Chair requested that respect was shown to Members and Officers, this request was not respected.

The Office Manager at Medway Community Primary School requested members of the public to respect that they were in a school and allow Members and officers, and other members of the public, to speak. As a suggestion she suggested that comments on the experimental residents parking scheme be written down and left at the school where they would be forwarded to the City Council for responses to be forwarded.

The meeting continued to be disrupted and the Chair made every effort to keep the meeting under control.

A member of the public stated that earlier in the meeting the City Mayor had made reference to a survey that had been undertaken to ascertain whether a scheme was required, but was completed prior to the City Mayor coming into power. From looking at the Council website it appeared that not all residents voted so that the result was not true. Andy responded by stating that he was glad the website had been accessed but that it was true that not all residents had voted, in the same way that not everyone who was eligible voted at the City Council elections for instance. It was acknowledged that there was some doubt in the area about the scheme, hence the experimental approach being taken.

The City Mayor reiterated that the scheme was experimental and would be closely monitored and removed if it proved not to be wanted by a majority of local people.

A member of the public, representing a group of local people in the area, made reference to the on-line questionnaire that had not made any reference to 1 car ownership, and stated that in his opinion the results of the questionnaire had been massaged. Andy responded by stating that he had responded to earlier correspondence with the member of the public and tried to give assurances that the results of the questionnaire had not been massaged and that the member of public and others had also objected to an earlier residents parking scheme for the area that had then subsequently been abandoned. Discussion then took place at the City Council around implementing an experimental scheme.

The same member of the public then stated that the Council clearly wanted to use the scheme to raise revenue from local residents and criticised the way the Council had been dealing exclusively with local organisations such as Highfields Association of residents and tenants (HART). Andy responded that the purpose of the scheme was to try and address the concerns of a number of residents around commuter parking and car parking in general. The City Council had spoken with HART, together with a number of other local groups, during the consultation phase and he stated that he did not see a problem with this. From the number of votes received it was believed that a majority was actually in favour of a residents parking scheme.

The meeting continued to be interrupted by a number of residents and following further pleas for order it continued.

The City Mayor summed up discussions by stating that he was not defending the scheme in any way, but reiterated that the scheme would be going ahead as an experimental scheme. The City mayor promised to return to the Community Meeting and inform residents of how the scheme was being monitored and gave an absolute commitment that a proper investigation would be carried out as to how the experimental scheme was running.

Further dissent took place and, at this point, it was agreed that the meeting should be adjourned to allow the situation to settle to allow the remainder of the business to be transacted.

The meeting adjourned at 7.28 pm.

The meeting then re-convened at 7.45 pm.

## 8. BUDGET

Anita Patel, Members Support Officer introduced the funding applications that had been received since the last meeting and these were considered as follows. Anita stated that at the current time some £15,000 was available within the Community Meeting Budget to spend for 2011/2012: -

### Applications deferred from the last meeting

£

i) **Medway Community Primary School**

**15,000**

Application previously submitted to provide an all-weather pitch at the school. The Community Meeting had previously deferred the application (24<sup>th</sup> January and 13<sup>th</sup> March), pending the availability of remaining balances at the end of the financial year 2010/2011.

The Head Teacher stated that there was limited space for an all-weather pitch outside the school that was intended for school use during school time, and for community use at other times. Fund raising had so far raised some £11,000 towards the project.

There was general support of the application although it was stated by a member of the public that the Community Meeting Budget should be available to further the aims of the Community Meeting Action Plan.

**AGREED:**

that, in recognition of the efforts made by the school to raise funds for this project and, subject to assurances being received regarding community use of the all-weather pitch that **£1,500 be Approved.**

ii) **Azhad Beheno**

**2355.81**

Application previously submitted to provide and maintain a shrub border at **Evington Mosque**. The Community Meeting had previously deferred the application pending the receipt of additional information from the applicants.

The applicant was not represented at the meeting.

**AGREED:**

that, in the absence of the applicant the application be **Refused.**

### New Application

iii) **St. Philip's Centre**

**1000**

Application received to part fund a comprehensive Social Action Summer Scheme at the St. Philip's Centre. The funding was to assist with the cost of minibus hire, refreshment costs and the cost of the use of the Church Hall.

The applicant attended the meeting and stated that funding had been sought from various other sources.

**AGREED:**

that the application be part funded in the sum of **£500**.

**Late Applications**

**iv) Highfields Area Forum 2,500**

Application received to engage a consultant for 6 days, to fund conference venue and printing costs of **Highfields Area Plan**. The Area Plan was currently partly prepared, funded by Castle and Spinney Hills Community Meetings and this bid would enable wider consultation with the local communities, discussion with stakeholders and final printing.

The applicant did not attend the meeting.

**AGREED:**

that, in the absence of the Applicant the application be **Refused**.

**v) Highfields Community Association 6,000**

Application to part fund the holding of a **Highfields Festival** on 23/24 July 2011 based in and around Highfields Centre. The event would comprise a range of indoor/outdoor activities and would be targeted at the Highfields community.

The applicant did not attend the meeting.

**AGREED:**

that, in the absence of the Applicant the application be **Refused**.

**9. CITY WARDENS**

This item was deferred.

**10. LOCAL POLICING UPDATE**

This item was deferred.

**11. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was reported that a programme of dates for 2011/2012 would be circulated as soon as possible.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Urgent Business.

## **13. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.



