

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Thursday, 11 October 2012

Held at: St Edward the Confessor Catholic Church, 633 Aylestone Road, Aylestone, Leicester, LE2 8TF

Who was there:

Councillor Adam Clarke

Councillor Nigel Porter

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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.

Ward Councillors and General Information Members of the Ward could talk to their local councillors and raise general queries	Police Issues Officers of the Local Policing Unit were present to talk about issues and raise general queries.
Heartlink A representative of Healthwatch was present to promote Healthwatch and to advise of latest developments.	Hot Lofts Scheme Geoff Hutchins was present to talk to local residents about the Hot Loft Scheme and to distribute energy saving devices.
Traffic Up-date Officers from the City Council and Leicestershire County Council were present to discuss the proposals for the 20mph zones and the Aylestone Bus Lane/Corridor.	Domestic Violence Awareness Stephanie McBurney and Meena Kumari were present to discuss the services provided by the Domestic Violence Team and to distribute leaflets and information.

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.

145. CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Clarke announced that he would be Chair for the meeting and he welcomed everyone to the meeting.

146. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

147. 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 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Clarke declared an Other Disclosable Interest in community budget items as he had been involved in discussions on the grant applications and he had also previously been involved in discussions on the A426 Bus Corridor and the proposed 20 mph Zone.

Councillor Porter declared an Other Disclosable Interest in community budget items as he had been involved in discussions on the grant applications and he had also previously campaigned for improvements to the A426 Bus Corridor.

In accordance with the Council's new Code of Conduct these interest were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice Members' judgement of the public interest. The Members were not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting during discussion on these items.

148. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillors were asked to agree the minutes of the Aylestone Community Meeting, held on Monday 30 July 2012.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Aylestone Community Meeting, held on Monday 30 July 2012, be agreed as a correct record.

149. TRAFFIC UPDATE

AYLESTONE VILLAGE - PROPOSED 20 MPH ZONE

Mark Wills, Head of Transport Strategy, Leicester City Council gave a presentation on the proposed 20 mph Zone for Aylestone Village.

The proposal for 20mph Zones originated from the City Mayor's 100 Days Pledges following his election. Pledge 30 was to begin consultative work with councillors and residents on the introduction of 20mph zones near schools, community facilities and in residential areas. There was a programme of 9 such schemes for 2012/2013/2014 and initial consultation had started on the Aylestone Village proposal. 20mph Zones were different to 20mph limits in that they were a specific defined area where the speed of vehicles was self-enforcing through traffic calming and repeater signs.

During the initial consultation three issues had arisen which the meeting was requested to comment upon. These were:-

a) Middleton Street

Including a section of Middleton Street was not in the original proposal. A speed survey conducted at the Zebra Crossing on 22 August indicated that the average speed of vehicles was 28mph. This level of speed would cause concerns if the street was included in the 20mph Zone without traffic calming measures. If Middleton Street was to be included the 20 mph Zone, the zone would start a short way down Middleton Street to allow drivers to be aware that they were in the Zone and it would extend down to the junction with Riverside Drive.

Residents voted in favour of including Middleton Street in the proposal as it was often used as a 'rat-run'. They also asked that forms of traffic calming such as road narrowing be considered but that the safety of cyclists should be considered when designing traffic calming.

b) Old Church Street – No Right Turn at Junction

A survey had been carried out which identified that 56 vehicles turned left but 13 vehicle turned right into Middleton Street. Of the 56 vehicles that turned left 26 then turned right in Sanvey Lane and a further 18 did a 'U' Turn to go back down Middleton Street. The Police stated that they had carried out enforcement at the junction in the summer and had issued 10 tickets to drivers turning right, resulting in 5 drivers being fined. They had also carried out speed enforcement on Wigston Lane and found 2 out of 54 cars travelling in excess of the speed limit.

Discussion took place on whether a mini-roundabout could be provided to allow vehicles to turn right or whether the road should be closed to through traffic with drop bollards being in place to allow access to the Church and Church Hall when services and functions were held.

Residents of Old Hall Street stated that they did not wish to see the right turn being reinstated as they had campaigned for years to get the current ban on rights turns. The closure of the road did not receive support.

c) Disraeli Street

It had been suggested that there should be a contra-flow cycle lane to allow cyclists to turn right. Following discussion the public supported the proposal. A suggestion was made that the contra-flow cycle lane could be put on the opposite side of the road where the bend was wider.

Mr Wills thanked the public for their views and stated that these would be considered by the Deputy City Mayor when finalising details of the proposed scheme to be consulted upon with the public. When the consultation finished, the responses would be reported to the Deputy City Mayor and then, when the proposals had been finalised, Traffic Regulation Orders would be advertised in the local press and on the streets. If objections were received at that stage to the proposals, the objections, if not resolved, would be considered by the Planning Committee before a final decision was made. This process could take approximately 4-6 months to complete.

Mr Wills was thanked for his presentation.

A copy of the presentation can be found as part of the Minutes on the Council's website at the following link:-

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/documents/g5302/Public%20minutes%20Thursday%2011-Oct-2012%2018.pdf?T=11>

A426 BUS CORRIDOR PROJECT

Mr Tony Kirk, Group Manager, Sustainable Travel Group and Mr Lee Quincey, Team Manager Accessible Travel and Improvements, Leicestershire County Council, supported by Mr M Wills, Mr R Bateman and Mr S Warwick, Leicester City Council were in attendance to outline the proposed scheme being consulted upon and to answer questions.

Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council had made a joint bid under the Better Bus Area Fund, announced in December 2011, towards a range of bus route improvements along the A426. The bid was successful and £2.56m was awarded in March 2012 on condition that it was used by March 2014.

The project aimed to help grow the local economy with reduced congestion and improve the environment by encouraging more bus journeys. There were three elements to the project:-

a) Proposals on Bus Infrastructure Improvements

- i. Introduction of 24 hour/7 day Bus Lanes to bypass congested sections along the route.
- ii. Bus Lane Traffic Signal Controls to allow buses to get close to the front of queues at junctions.
- iii. Bus Lane enforcement to improve journey times and reliability.
- iv. Junction improvements to improve safety, increase capacity and reduce delays for users.
- v. Road maintenance to improve ride quality.

b) Proposals on Information and Behaviour Change

- i. Real time passenger information via the internet and mobile technology including a journey planner and web-site.
- ii. Focused promotion and marketing and improved timetable displays at bus stops to improve information and awareness for the services.
- iii. Smart and integrated ticketing using the OneCard with wireless technology that dispenses with having to use cash.
- iv. Travel to work grants providing subsidised travel for those attending interviews, training or during the first few weeks of employment.

c) Proposals on Quality Improvement to Existing Bus Services

- i. Bus stop improvements such as new bus shelters, seating and lighting etc.
- ii. Refurbished higher quality buses and daily vehicle cleaning.
- iii. Arriva City Centre presence to monitor service, reliability and passenger information in person.
- iv. Customer care for drivers.

In addition the wider benefits of the scheme proposals would include:-

- i. A speed limit reduction of 40mph to 30mph from south of the Soar Valley Way junction to south of the Woodbank Junction.
- ii. Use of bus lanes by cyclists to promote safe cycling along the route.
- iii. Junction safety improvements at the Soar Valley Way and Lutterworth Road junction, a high priority accident site.
- iv. Improved pedestrian crossing points.
- v. Better emergency vehicle access.
- vi. A reduction in the phases at traffic lights which should allow greater capacity to flow through the junctions and reduce congestion.

During discussion, members of the public commented that:-

- i. Cyclists don't like using Bus Lanes on safety grounds. (In response, it was stated that where possible the bus lanes would be 4 metres wide and there would be room for busses to pull out into traffic lanes if necessary)
- ii. There were three bus operators on the route and it was questioned why these were not part of the proposals. (In response, it was stated that Centre Bus and First Group had also supported the bid, but discussions would be held with both Centre Bus and Roberts Coaches)
- iii. The proposal to make the bus lanes 24 hour and 7 day a week was questioned when the existing bus lanes restrictions were well observed by motorists. (In response, it was stated that this was to improve clear understanding of the bus lane by motorist and to assist with enforcement. It was noted that since a similar 24 hour and seven day a week bus lane enforcement in the City Centre the level of PCN's had now dropped to 3 ½% of the previous observations) The public, however, felt the level of contravention on linear routes was far less than on City Centre routes.

The officers advised the public to take part in the consultation process and to submit views and comments. Work on implementing the proposals was due to start in February 2013.

All the officers were thanked for their participation in the item.

A copy of the presentation can be found as part of the Minutes on the Council's website at the following link:-

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/documents/g5302/Public%20minutes%20Thursday%2011-Oct-2012%2018.pdf?T=11>

150. BENEFIT ADVICE & SERVICES

Darren Moore, Team Leader, Welfare Rights, gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the benefits system next year.

During the presentation the following points and issues were mentioned:-

- Council Tax Benefit would be replaced by Council Tax Support from April 2013 and local authorities would receive 10% less government grant for the

scheme so recipients would pay more towards Council Tax. It was estimated that this could be between £2 - £5 and could impact upon 40,000 people in the City.

- There would be a Benefit cap of £500 per week for families and lone parents (£350 for singles) and would affect mainly families with 4 or more children.
- Housing Benefit paid to people of working age would be changed to reduce the level of eligible rent by 14% for 1 extra bedroom that was unoccupied and by 25% if two or more bedrooms were unoccupied. The level of benefit would then be calculated on the lower amount of eligible rent.
- The Disability Living Allowance would be abolished in April 2013 and replaced with a new scheme that would cut out the lowest level of allowances. Current recipients would be gradually re-assessed from the old system to the new points based system.
- The new system of Universal Credits would come into operation in April 2013 and was designed to simplify the current large number of means tested benefits into one payment. New claimants and existing claimants with change of circumstances would transfer to Universal Credits on 1 October 2013. Existing claimants, who could benefit from Universal Credits, would be transferred from April 2014 and everyone else would be transferred from the end of 2015 to the end of 2017.
- Some of the existing premiums were being abolished, e.g. disability and carers.
- It was envisaged that claimants would not be worse off at the point of change over; but there would be a gradual reduction in the level of benefits over a period of years.
- The qualification rules for Pension Credits were also changing. In future, Pension Credits will only be available when the youngest person in the partnership reaches pensionable age, rather than the oldest person as at present.
- Future Payments will be made monthly and be paid direct to the claimant and only one claimant per partnership. It will then be the claimant's responsibility to pay their rent and Council tax etc.
- Further help and assistance could be obtained from the Welfare Right Helpline number - 0116 2568211 or the Revenues and Benefits Service – 0116 2527006.
- The Community Legal Advice Service on Charles Street could also provide advice.

Mr Moore was thanked for his presentation.

151. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

Stephanie McBurney, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Leicester City Council and Meena Kumari, Manager, Safe Project attended the meeting to give presentation on Changing Domestic Violence Service in Leicester.

During the presentation the following points were made:-

- The service worked with both heterosexual and single sex partnerships.

- Issues could include psychological, sexual, physical, financial and emotional abuse.
- Approximately 1 in 6 men were affected and 1 in 3-4 women.
- The service dealt with 700-800 cases per month, which was approximately 50/55% of the cases in Leicestershire.
- There were two homicides each year in Leicester that resulted from domestic violence.
- The majority of people suffering from domestic violence did not tell anyone, but those that do usually confide in friends and family.
- There had been 2,785 cases in the Aylestone Ward for 2010/11, which represented 3% of all the cases for Leicester. The highest Ward in the City had 8% of cases.
- Project work had been undertaken in local schools to promote an understanding of the issues involved.
- There was a Special Domestic Violence Court and the Magistrates' Court in Leicester. The City was above the national average in relation to outcomes of 'positive justice' in cases heard by Magistrates.
- An anonymous case study was also outlined to the meeting as an example of the work involved and the help and support that could be provided.

Ms McBurney and Ms Kumari were thanked for their presentation.

A copy of the presentation can be found as part of the Minutes on the Council's website at the following link:-

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/documents/g5302/Public%20minutes%20Thursday%2011-Oct-2012%2018.pdf?T=11>

152. CHOICE ADVICE SERVICE

Glen Sutton, City Choice Advisor, attended the meeting to give a presentation on the Service's independent advice to parents and carers regarding all aspects of the secondary and primary schools admissions processes for pupils.

The key points were:-

Secondary Schools – Applications to be submitted by 31 October 2012.

Year 6 pupils – application packs had been sent out in September and it was advisable to complete and submit the application form now. It was also advisable to fill in all the preferences.

Year 5/6 pupils – applications for pupils wishing to attend a County school should be submitted by 31 October 2012.

Children in Reception Classes – the application process had started for children starting school in September 2013. Admission packs were being

sent to home addresses and the deadline for the submission of applications was 15 January 2013. There were sufficient school places overall for all new admissions. However, there were limited places in some areas; so not everyone may get their first preference. It was, therefore, advisable to submit applications as soon as possible to improve the chances of securing the first preference.

Mr Sutton was thanked for his presentation.

153. MONTROSE OPEN SPACE AND SPINNEY

Mr A Brown, Project and Development Officer, Parks and Green Spaces Services, Leicester City Council, attended the meeting to provide feedback on the recent consultation regarding improvements to the Park and Spinney.

Although the majority of respondents were in favour of site improvements, a number of objections and concerns had been raised in relation to anti-social behaviour on the open space. The Parks Services team were aware of these problems and had worked with the Police to reduce them. This would continue in the future.

The proposed works had been prioritised and would be phased over a period of time subject to funding. These were:-

1. Refurbishments of existing older children's play facilities on the main open space.
2. Improved pedestrian access to the open space through the spinney by the provision of steps on the embankment, handrail to the steps and an all-weather narrow gravel path to prevent vehicle use.
3. New welcome and interpretation boards about the Spinney flora and fauna.
4. New dual litter/dog bins at Matts Close entrance and main open space.
5. New anti-vandal seats in the main open space away from houses to prevent disturbance to residents at night.
6. Promote volunteer opportunities to improve the habitat and biodiversity of the Spinney to include:-
 - a. Control of self-setting trees and plant additional oak trees to create a more diverse age structure in the Spinney.
 - b. Plant under-storey trees to diversify the woodland habitat to encourage nesting birds.
 - c. Create log piles to create additional habitats.
 - d. Clear self-set trees and dominant ruderal vegetation from marsh.
7. Improve access to Matts Close by removing tree trunk barrier and replace with post and rail fence.
8. New gravel path to link Matts Close to the proposed steps at the Spinney.
9. Circular gravel path around the main open space.

Mr Brown stated that the first volunteer session would be held on 13 November 2012. A further two sessions may be organised and these would be advertised on posters in the local area.

Mr Brown was thanked for his presentation.

154. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING - UPDATE

PC Kevin Butler, Local Beat Officer, Leicestershire Constabulary, attended the meeting to give a policing update for the Aylestone Ward. Sgt Leon Gamble and CSO Diane Stewart were also in attendance.

PC Butler gave the following crime figures for the ward in the preceding 90 day period:-

- 12 burglaries from domestic properties – all but one of these were opportunist ‘walk-ins’ through doors and windows being left open. They had occurred both during the day and the night.
- 17 burglaries from commercial properties resulting in three convictions.
- 17 thefts from motor vehicles. One involved the theft of a satellite navigation system and all the others were the theft of number plates that were later used in filling station fuel thefts. The Police had a supply of security fixing screws for car number plates which were available free of charge. Anyone wishing to have these should e-mail the Police with details of the make and model of their car.

PC Butler reported that he would become the ward Beacon Officer from 7 January 2013. Sgt Gamble would oversee the beat team for the ward. Sgt Gamble reported that 3 warrants had been issued; two of which had resulted in convictions for drug related incidents. Sgt Gamble requested that anyone seeing any suspicious behaviour or having any intelligence on crimes; to report it to the Police on the 101 number. He also indicated that Operation Dynamo would be taking place shortly involving a team of 8 plain clothed officers and they may be operating in the ward.

There were free posters available at the meeting for households to display if they did not wish ‘Trick or Treaters’ to knock on their doors on Halloween.

The meeting congratulated PC Butler on his recent award from Chief Superintendent Nixon in relation to work he had undertaken on a Fraud Inquiry.

155. CITY WARDEN - UPDATE

Roy Smith, City Warden, gave an update on issues that had been dealt with within the Ward since the last meeting. He reported upon the following:-

- The work on the Business Waste Management campaign had concluded and there had been only 2 incidents of complaints.
- Following the issue that was raised at the last meeting concerning the powers of the Riverside Rangers; it was reported that the Rangers had powers to enforce 61 Byelaws to keep the Aylestone Meadows open. Details of these could be found on the City Council’s web-site.
- Issues of bins being left out in Gilmorton Close and Lilly Marriott House had now been resolved.
- There had also been an issue of fly-tipping at Lilly Marriott House and discussions had been held to try and resolve the matter.

- The number of littering tickets had been reduced, as there was now a proactive approach to littering. For example, rather than waiting to observe smokers discarding their cigarette butts and then issuing a ticket; smokers were now approached whilst still smoking their cigarettes and were being offered a 'stubby' to dispose of the cigarette butt.
- Littering from vehicles had also reduced and only 3 tickets had been issued.
- There was a new initiative to collate information on graffiti to try and identify those responsible. Residents were also being approached to help with removing graffiti with anti-graffiti kits. It was intended to publicise this in the local papers with before and after photographs. PC Butler suggested that the City Warden could liaise with the Police as they too held intelligence on graffiti.
- Work with local residents and the Police had taken place to try and reduce the illegal right turn into Middleton Street.

156. BUDGET

The Chair presented the Community Meeting Budget and explained that a number of new funding applications had been received since the previous meeting.

The approved expenditure on grants so far this year for the Ward was £4,415.30, which left a balance of £13,584.70.

The following applications had been received and were considered by the meeting:-

Carols in the Park Amount Requested £1,000

An application had been received from the Spirit of Aylestone Community Group to fund an event for the whole community to join in carol singing, led by a brass band, and a nativity drama at Aylestone Hall Gardens, including light refreshments, warm mince pies and coffee and tea. The event would be held on Sunday 16 December 2012 in association with Leicester City Council and Aylestone Bowling Club. A representative of the application group addressed the meeting to outline the bid.

RESOLVED:

That the application for £1,000 be supported and approved in full.

Messy Church Amount Requested £940

An application had been received to fund 12 monthly sessions of the 'Messy Church' on the last Sunday of each month in the community room on the Gilmorton Estate from 4.30pm to 6.00pm. The programme was in partnership with the newly formed residents group and all the activities were open to all. Each session had two or three craft activities, a puzzle activity, short story time and singing a couple of songs. A representative of the application group addressed the meeting to outline the bid.

RESOLVED:

that the application for £940 be supported and approved in full

**Environmental Improvements to Shopping Area Hopyard Close
Amount Requested £500**

An application had been received from the Gilmorton Development Group to improve the environment around the community centre, shops and surrounding area by planting a variety of shrubs, plants and trees. All planting would be undertaken by volunteers.

RESOLVED:

that the application for £500 be supported and approved in full.

**Purchase of Tools for New Hedge Maintenance
Amount Requested £338.20**

An application had been received from the Eyres Monsell Allotment and Gardening Society to purchase a range of equipment to help clear out unwanted growth and then maintain newly formed hedges. The boundary hedge was being replanted with native trees and hedging plants and a lot of the existing hedge was being laid by professional hedge layers.

RESOLVED:

that the application for £388.20 be supported and approved in full.

157. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that future Community Meetings would be held on Tuesday 22 January 2013 and Thursday 14 March at venues to be confirmed.

158. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MEET THE MAYOR

Councillor Clarke reported that the City Mayor would be outside the Co-op on Aylestone Road from 11am to noon on Saturday 13 October to meet citizens as part of his approach to find out what people wanted to see improved in the City.

WARD SURGERY

Councillor Porter reported that he was holding a ward Surgery from 11am to noon on Saturday 13 October in the Lansdowne Community Centre.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS

Councillor Clarke reminded the meeting that the election for the Police and Crime Commissioner was taking place on 15 November and he urged everyone to take part in the election. The new Police and Crime Commissioner would work with the public, police and local partners to ensure there was robust policing throughout the city and

county. The person would also be responsible for making sure the Chief Constable ran the police service efficiently and effectively.

159. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.