

**ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF CASTLE AND PRIORY, ST
JAMES'S AND ST THOMAS'S COMMUNITY FORUM**

Monday 2nd September, 2013 at 6.30 p.m.
at Wrens Nest Community Centre, Summer Road, Dudley

PRESENT: -

Councillor K Finch (Chair);
Councillor A Ahmed (Vice-Chair);
Councillors K Ahmed, Ali, M Aston, A Finch and Waltho.

OFFICERS:

M Bowsher (Lead Officer to the Forum) – Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services and S Griffiths – Directorate of Corporate Resources

together with 24 Members of the public and an officer from West Midlands Police.

9. **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Roberts.

10. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Following general announcements the Councillors and officers introduced themselves.

11. **LISTENING TO YOU: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS**

Local residents raised questions and made comments as set out below. These issues would be referred to the relevant Directorate or appropriate body for a response:-

Nature of question/comment

- (1) Issues concerning new build properties on the site of the Old Park Public House, Russells Hall – need to clean up roads, footpaths and drains.
- (2) Request for attention to be given to both corners of Corbyn Road, joining onto Middlepark Road, Russells Hall, as the road had 'sunk in' and held surplus water.

- (3) Request for the area between 109 – 111 Middlepark Road, Russells Hall to be cleared again as the area was overgrown and rubbish had been deposited on the site.
- (4) Request to identify monies (possibly Section 106 funding) to improve the green space at the rear of Rotary House, Middlepark Road, Russells Hall to facilitate nature walks.
- (5) Request to attend to trees in the Oval, Russells Hall.
- (6) Request to extend a 'white line' road marking adjacent to the 'yellow box' markings at the bottom of Pearce Close, Russells Hall to prevent cars parking on the junction.
- (7) Issues concerning Barrow Hill and surrounding paths covered with nettles and brambles.
- (8) Request to deal with rubbish on Russells Hall Estate starting from Bushey Fields Road; grass cutting; bushes hanging over paths and a street sign that has been left on the floor for several months.
- (9) Request for improved lighting in Pearce Close, Russells Hall.
- (10) Request for a waste bin to be located in the vicinity of St. Augustine's Church.
- (11) Request for a maintenance order to be made in respect of a property in Grazebrook Road, Dudley and for the Council to inspect the condition of the property.
- (12) Request for an explanation concerning the conduct of the vote taken at the Development Control Committee on 5th August, 2013 relating to the planning applications for the demolition of the Hippodrome building in Castle Hill, Dudley.

Other Issues raised and/or answered on the evening:-

- Various concerns were raised by residents of Fourwinds Road, Sledmere Estate, Dudley. The concerns related to loose and dangerous slabs on steps; loose handrails; trees causing obstructions; lack of litter bins and the need to install adequate lighting. Councillors Ali and Waltho requested that officers from the Directorates of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Urban Environment arrange a site visit to the Estate to enable the issues to be considered by officers in company with the residents and ward Councillors.

- Further concerns were expressed regarding a lack of Police presence on the Sledmere Estate. The Police representative referred to the work of the St Thomas's Neighbourhood Team and the Police restructuring which necessitated the prioritisation of resources. Residents were encouraged to attend Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings to raise policing issues.
- A funding application form would be supplied in relation to the possible request for a grant towards the improvement of toilet facilities at Wrens Nest Community Centre.
- A representative of the Dudley Market Traders Association raised concerns about children and adults congregating in Dudley Market Place with associated incidents of anti social behaviour. The Police representative indicated that he was aware of the issues, including complaints about response times, and outlined ongoing work to address the problems in consultation with Market Traders and shopkeepers.
- Reference was made to the rotation of venues and increasing publicity for meetings of the Community Forums. In acknowledging that the Council had very limited resources for publicity, Members urged local residents to continue supporting and actively promoting their Community Forum. Any ideas for improvements would be considered.
- Promotional information concerning the Black Country Tool Bank was circulated at the meeting.
- Reference was made to recently refreshed signage in Dudley Town Centre concerning the 'no alcohol' zones. Members commented on the need for effective enforcement of the zones.

12. WORKING WITH YOU – TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

- Councillor A Finch requested a position statement concerning the Estate Office in Summer Road, Wrens Nest.
- Councillor M Aston raised the issue of the opening of toilets in Dudley Town Centre on Sundays. The Chair indicated that this would be raised with Cabinet Members and at full Council.
- Councillor Ali made reference to ongoing regeneration initiatives affecting Dudley Town Centre and issues associated with car parking. The Chair asked that an officer be invited to attend a future meeting concerning wider regeneration plans for Dudley Town Centre.

13. AREA GRANTS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on applications for funding.

Councillors Ali and Waltho declared non-pecuniary interests in the application from St Thomas's Network in view of their involvement with this organisation.

AGREED:-

- (1) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommend to approve the application from St Thomas's Network for funding of up to £2,688 to purchase a number of 'stacking suite' trolleys to enhance storage space and reduce health and safety risks to staff/volunteers, with the aim of maximising furniture distribution to those in need.
- (2) That the application received from Old Park Tenants and Residents Association for funding towards a community fun day be deferred until the next meeting.
- (3) That the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Ward Councillors, be authorised to make a recommendation to the Director of Corporate Resources on the application received from the Whole Child Foundation CIC to provide a pilot extended project session for young people at St Thomas's Network during the October, 2013 half-term school holidays.

14.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Forum would be on Monday, 4th November, 2013 at 6.30pm at St. Thomas's Network, Beechwood Road, Dudley.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm