

# **ST. MATTHEWS AND BIRCHILLS/LEAMORE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 at 6.00 p.m.**

**at The Central Methodist Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall**

## **Present**

Councillor Tim Oliver (Chairman)  
Councillor Mohammed Arif  
Councillor Joan Barton  
Mr. Malcolm Barton  
Mr. Terry Edis  
Mrs. Jane Evans  
Sergeant R. Harris  
Mr. Christopher Jones  
Councillor Haqnawaz Khan  
Councillor Barbara McCracken  
Mr. Andrew Moulton  
Mr. Aftab Nawaz  
Mrs. Elaine Perrins  
Mr. Mejamur Rohman  
Councillor Carol Rose  
Rev. David Sims

45/05

## **Introductions**

For the benefit of members of the public, Members of the Partnership and officers introduced themselves.

46/05

## **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Martin Cain, Secondary Head Teacher representative, Hilson Carter, Locally Appointed Partner and Tariq Khan, Locally Appointed Partner.

47/05

## **Minutes**

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**Feedback on Issues Raised by Way of Public Forum/Petitions****(a) Alleyways in Croft Street area - ownership and rights of way issues**

The Chairman indicated that he had not received any further information on this issue.

**Resolved**

That officers be requested to investigate and seek feedback on this issue.

**(b) Mellish Road Church**

The Chairman advised that Cabinet, at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2005, had considered a report in private session. Because of that, he was unable to provide formal feedback on this particular issue. He added, however, that it was reasonable to expect that the Council would serve a Repairs Notice on the owner, due to the building, which is Grade II listed, being at risk. He added that this would require the owner to bring the property into an acceptable state of repair within two months of the date of the Notice being served and that if the Repairs Notice was not complied with, the Council could consider action under Compulsory Purchase powers.

**(c) Butts Action Group**

Members were advised that the Council had requested that the Group pull together a workable Business Plan which sets out how they will fund the purchase and restoration of the Church and how this would be sustained without reliance on Council or rent funding. Members were further advised that the Group had been provided with external grant information via the Council's Grant Finder Database and this information was awaited. It was pointed out that Mike Gaffney, Council's Non-statutory Funding Source Manager, had already met with the Group and would be meeting them again during April to examine any possible funding sources regarding restoration of the Church, particularly the community use aspect.

**Resolved**

That officers be requested to write to the Group providing them with an update on the issues and urging them to hold together in the hope of something positive in the future.

**(d) Beechdale Regeneration Partnership**

Members were advised that the Council was working with the Partnership in a number of areas, most recently, the Transforming Your Space Programme improvements to Beechdale Park and that this would continue as the opportunity arises.

## **Resolved**

That the feedback be noted and that officers be requested to check the position regarding the consultation exercise with regard to Stephenson Square and that pressure be put on the Walsall Housing Group regarding the boarded up premises, in an effort to provide an immediate environmental impact.

### **(e) Code of Conduct**

The Chairman indicated that he had not received a reply on this issue from the Monitoring Officer. Elaine Perrins indicated that with regard to her organisation signing up to the Code of Conduct, she would be attending a meeting with her advisers to see what action to take on this issue.

## **Resolved**

That the feedback be noted and that the Head of Neighbourhood Partnerships be requested to chase up a response from the Monitoring Officer on this issue.

### **(f) Clarification of position of CEN/LAPs - Conflict of Interest**

Members were advised that a reply from the Monitoring Officer was awaited on this issue.

## **Resolved**

That the Head of Neighbourhood Partnerships be requested to chase up a response from the Monitoring Officer on this issue.

49/05

## **Locally Appointed Partner Vacancies**

The report of the Head of Democratic Services was submitted:-

(see annexed)

## **Resolved**

That having considered the application on its own merit, the St. Matthews and Birchills/Leamore Local Neighbourhood Partnership approve the appointment of Rev. B. David Sims as a Locally Appointed Partner for the remainder of the current Municipal Year.

Rev. Sims joined the meeting at this point.

50/05

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

51/05

### **Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted at this stage.

52/05

### **Public Forum**

With the approval of the Partnership, the following members of the public addressed the meeting:-

R.S. Sohal, Shimla Peppers, Ablewell Street, Walsall

Mr. Sohal indicated that he had minor concerns regarding the issue of no business representation on Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

The Chairman indicated that the issue of the appointment of Locally Appointed Partners was not a satisfactory process but it was the way in which the Council wanted to work. He made the point that the Team Groups were not exclusive and that anyone who wanted to contribute was encouraged to do so.

### **Resolved**

That a letter be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce suggesting representation from the business sector on the Theme Groups established by Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

D. Mahoney

Mr. Mahoney submitted a petition containing 757 signatures in support of retaining the Mellish Road Church. He made the point that his Group had not been given a copy of the condition report on the building and asked that if it was available, could a copy be provided to the Butts Action Group to assist them in preparing their Business Plan.

### **Resolved**

That officers be requested to ascertain the position regarding the condition report on the building and advise Mr. Mahoney accordingly.

Mr. Mahoney referred to the roundabout sculpture in front of the Mellish Road Church. He indicated that £1¼ million was quoted in the press for the provision of a sculpture. His Group had no comment on the sculpture but felt that the location on the roundabout was not acceptable. He suggested that there was a need for joined up thinking and made the point that local Councillors were not aware of this issue.

He asked whether the funding quoted in the press could be used for other issues.

Andrew Rainsford, External Funding Manager, advised that funding may be specifically for the sculpture and for no other use.

### **Resolved**

That officers ascertain the position regarding the funding for the sculpture and advise Mr. Mahoney accordingly.

### **A. Chand**

#### **Alleygate problem on Bath Road**

Mr. Chand indicated that, following a report from Caldmore Housing tenants, there was an alley problem on Bath Road. Prostitutes were gathering in the alleyway outside the disabled persons home in Bath Road and the tenants were asking that consideration be given to an alleygating scheme in the area.

#### **Hope Street car park**

Mr. Chand indicated that tenants wanted a gate put there due to persistent problems with dumping of rubbish, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. He added that the land was owned by WHG.

#### **Buckle Close**

Mr. Chand indicated that this was a cul-de-sac and there were problems with drug users, dumping of rubbish and abandoned cars and asked that consideration be given to erecting a barrier or a fence in that area.

#### **Alleyway from Bath Road to Little London**

Mr. Chand indicated that the residents were asking that this alleyway be considered for inclusion in the Alleygating Scheme.

Members were advised that although the land was in the ownership of Caldmore Housing, they were unsympathetic to funding the improvements.

Members questioned whether SRB funding through the Community Safety Unit could be used to fund an Alleygating Scheme. It was suggested that the LNP should support a request being made by residents to the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership.

On the question of support from Caldmore Housing, Mr. Moulton indicated that Caldmore Housing were pushing tenants to become members of Tenants Groups. Caldmore Housing would not commit themselves unless they got the backing of tenants. Tenants were scared to do so, in consequence of which, it was felt that funding should be sought elsewhere.

On the question of external funding, Mr. Andrew Rainsford, External Funding Manager, undertook to discuss the issue with Mr. Chand after the meeting.

On the question of funding from SRB, Terry Edis advised that there was no money available in SRB5 and that the Council was having to pick up any overspends. He suggested that the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership was probably the right direction to go.

### **Resolved**

That the LNP support a request being made by the residents to the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership for consideration of these projects in the Alleygating Schemes.

### **D. Anslow, 20 Broadway North**

Mr. Anslow asked why he had not been provided with a green refuse bin or bottle box.

Terry Edis indicated that multi-storey flats had not been included in the Scheme.

The Chairman undertook to obtain an answer to Mr. Anslow's question.

### **Rosie Campbell, Joseph Rowntree Foundation**

Rosie Campbell addressed the Partnership and indicated that she was part of a research study being conducted on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by Stafford University, Loughborough University and the University of Strathclyde into living and working in areas of street sex work. She advised that the project would focus on the use of residential streets in urban communities in Britain characterised as areas of street sex work. The aims of the project were to explore the conflicts that may arise between sex workers and other users of public space in residential areas recognised as areas of street sex work, to assess the range of community responses to street prostitution and to assess whether it was possible to work together to reduce tension and conflict in these shared public spaces. She advised that the research would take place in four locations in England, namely, Birmingham, Coventry, Manchester and Walsall. The project would run from July, 2004 to September, 2005 and the outputs of the research would include a final report and a summary of findings. There would also be feedback workshops and short briefing notes. She asked that residents who

lived and worked in areas of street sex work should speak to those undertaking the study on the issues they were facing.

### **Dennis Anslow, 20 Broadway North**

Mr. Anslow referred to the Walsall Pride newsletter and the Conservative leaflet "In Touch". He indicated that both had been printed in the same colours and asked why Walsall Pride had not been produced in a neutral colour.

In reply, Mr. Blower, Communications Officer, advised that the Walsall Pride newsletter would be produced in different colours for each section of the year.

53/05

### **Partnership Plan and Feedback from Task Groups**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Members were advised that all of the Task Groups had met apart from the Access to Buildings and Services Task Group. The Task Groups would now start prioritising.

Andrew Moulton indicated that he was not happy with the first of the recommendations, namely, that the Disability Working Group merge with the Access to Buildings and Services Task Group because he felt that the disability issue was falling further and further behind.

With regard to nomination of a champion, it was felt that whoever chairs the Task Group should report back to the Partnership.

With regard to encouraging wider participation from community members within the Task Groups, this was generally endorsed.

With regard to the plan itself, Mrs. Maureen Woodcock, a member of the public, referred to the Blue Coat Comprehensive School site. She pointed out that the school was built on a split site and asked what the possibility was of close of the road which cuts the school in two. In addition, she referred to the Arboretum and made the point that it was not the "jewel in the crown" that it once was. Councillor Barbara McCracken made the point that a lot of people in the area were badly affected by events at the Arboretum.

Mr. Andrew Moulton referred to the fact that the location of Shopmobility and the issue over accessibility of buildings was not included in the Plan. The Chairman made the point that this was not an issue for the LNP since this was a Boroughwide issue. He would, however, welcome a Town Centre shopmobility base.

Andrew Moulton referred to the question of secretarial support for the Disability Working Group and made the point that this had not yet been provided.

The Chairman undertook to investigate.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That approval be given to merger between the Disability Working Group and the Access to Buildings and Services Task Group but that the Disability Working Group continue to meet in its own right;
- (2) That the champion for Task Groups to feed back to LNPs be whoever chairs the relevant Task Group;
- (3) That individual LNP Members be asked to encourage wider participation from community members within the Task Groups;
- (4) That at each Task Group meeting, a Chair be nominated from within;
- (5) That the question raised by Maureen Woodcock be investigated and that Mrs. Woodcock be advised of the response;
- (6) That the question of secretarial support for the Disability Working Group be further investigated and that the Members of that Group be advised accordingly of the results of the investigation.

#### **54/05 Disability Working Group Feedback**

A copy of the notes of the Working Group held on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 were circulated and it was noted that work was in hand.

#### **55/05 CEN presentation**

It was noted that no one from the CEN was in attendance to give a presentation to the Partnership.

#### **56/05 Sawmill Close Union of Tenants - Presentation**

Mr. Andrew Moulton advised Members that a request for PowerPoint equipment had not been passed to the appropriate section, as a result of which, no equipment had been made available.

### **Resolved**

That the presentation be deferred to the next meeting of the Partnership.

57/05

### **Training and Development Issues**

Imke Trum reported that Place Check training sessions would be held on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 at 6.00 p.m. She also advised Members that the Housing Task Group had requested training about the Local Housing Strategy. This was to be arranged for sometime in May.

Members expressed their concern that more notice of the meetings should be given where possible.

#### **Resolved**

That the report be noted and that officers ensure that more notice is given of meetings where possible.

58/05

### **Other Issues**

Terry Edis expressed the view that the tenants and residents of multi-storey flats were not receiving copies of the so called "free" newspapers. An offer had been made to deliver the newspapers by the residents of the Burrowes Street flats, providing the newspapers were delivered to a central point. So far, no reply had been received.

#### **Resolved**

That officers be requested to write to the newspaper concerned and ascertain the position.

Members were advised that a public sculpture meeting had been arranged by Walsall Community Arts to take place at the Council House on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2005.

With regard to venues for future meetings, Members expressed the view that smaller venues would be preferable for future meetings of the Partnership.

### **Termination of Meeting**

The meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m.

Chairman .....

Date .....