

ST. MATTHEWS AND BIRCHILLS/LEAMORE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Thursday, 21st September, 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

at the Beechdale Centre, Stephenson Avenue, Beechdale, Walsall

Present

Councillor Tim Oliver (Chairman)
Councillor Mohammed Arif
Councillor Joan Barton
Mr. Malcolm Barton
Mr. Hilson Carter
Mr. Terry Edis
Mrs. Jane Evans
Sergeant Robert Harris
Mr. Christopher Jones
Councillor Haqnawaz Khan
Margot Lambert
Councillor Barbara McCracken
Mr. Andrew Moulton
Mr. Aftab Nawaz
Mr. Alan Paxton
Councillor Jonathan Phillips

In Attendance

Kevin Woodhouse
Clive Wright

134/06

Venue

The Chairman apologised for the change of venue, this was due to unforeseen circumstances which prevented the meeting taking place at the Croft Community Association.

The Chairman asked for a presentation from Frank F. Harrison Community Association on their work in the area covered by the St. Matthews and Birchills/Leamore Local Neighbourhood Partnership, for submission to the next meeting.

135/06 **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. G. Brookes (WHG), Mr. M. Cain (CAP), Rev. D. Sims (LAP), Sergeant L. Campion (Beat Sergeant), Inspector A. Gilbert (CAP), Mr. J. Kempson (Fire Service).

Sergeant R. Harris and Mr. Alan Paxton were attending as substitutes for Inspector A. Gilbert and Mr. J. Kempson respectively.

136/06 **Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon:-

Mr. T. Edis
Mr. C. Jones
Ms. M. Lambert

137/06 **Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted.

138/06 **Minutes**

Margot Lambert (Caldmore Housing) indicated that she had been in attendance at the meeting on 31st July, 2006 but her attendance had not been recorded.

Resolved

That, subject to the foregoing, the minutes of the meeting held on 31st July, 2006, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

139/06 **Matters arising**

(i) Funding for Community Forums

Clive Wright (WBSP) was in attendance for this item. He indicated that this would fit in with the Stronger and Safer Pillar with funding direct from Government Office.

He indicated that there had been a lack of representation at the decision making bodies and he was working to establish an action plan regarding delivery of the LAA and was requiring all applicants to identify how they were involved in the voluntary sector.

He had held a meeting with the Chairmen of the CEN and Age Concern to discuss this prior to it being considered at the Community Empowerment Board. He had also raised this with the Executive Committee of the LSP and there would be an item on the agenda for the meeting on 25th September asking for a Sub-Group to be established to discuss this issue in more detail.

He was working with the WVA to find out who is doing what and where the gaps are. He said that there was an issue as to when this would come on stream.

There was no money available yet as no applications had been received and it was impossible to ascertain what funding was required.

He needed to know what the priorities were and was trying to find mechanisms to sort this out.

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

(ii) Caldmore Green Working Group

It had previously been proposed that a facilitated Working Group would be arranged at the earliest opportunity to explore the issues.

The Group would, initially, be limited to LNP Members. A meeting would be held some time before the next scheduled meeting of the LNP.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

(iii) Birchills Playing Fields

It was noted that the decision of the Cabinet on this issue had been deferred to its November meeting. Members were advised that the public workshop on this issue would be held locally.

(iv) Alleygating

Members expressed their frustration that there had been no progress on this issue. It was apparently an issue of capacity within the Council services to progress this issue.

Resolved

That the information be noted and that officers be requested to continue to press for progress on this issue.

140/06

Public Forum

With the approval of the Partnership, Mr. J. Adams, 135 Stephenson Avenue, was invited to address the Partnership.

Mr. Adams advised Members that he was speaking on behalf of residents regarding the 'gulley' area behind the library in Stephenson Square. He likened it to a 'rubbish tip'. Also, the rear of the library car park was overgrown and had not been tended for at least 8 years. Mr. Adams indicated that he had been advised that there were no funds available, although other parts of the estate were kept in a better condition. He added that letters had been sent to both the Frank F. Harrison management and to the BCHA management and, as yet, no help had been given.

Resolved

That officers be requested to establish who owns the land in question and who was responsible for its maintenance.

141/06

Drugs Issues

(a) In Birchills

The Partnership received a presentation by Kevin Woodhouse, Service Manager of the Young Persons Substance Misuse Service. Kevin reassured the LNP that work was being done in the Birchills area and the Service had received referrals which were being processed. Where possible, the Service was providing one to one support. He advised the LNP that the process was long and there was a need for young persons to be strong enough to approach the Service. He informed the LNP that anyone could make a referral but the young person who was the subject of the referral needed to be aware of and agree to the referral. He concluded by saying that his Service was linked in with all of the Youth Service in Walsall. He had some very experienced staff, some of whom were very local to Walsall.

There was a discussion around the prescription of alternative drugs and the fact that this was a confidential service. The point was made that the Service could not force young people to engage the Service, even if their parents wanted them to, although there would probably be some dialogue with the children, and, if there was any child protection involved, this would be referred to the appropriate Service. Kevin pointed out that there were a number of young persons on his Teams referral list that the Service was trying to engage with, who did not want to be involved with the Service.

The question of referrals in the LNP area was raised. Kevin advised that this figure would be supplied to the Chairman but, over a 5 month period, there were 78 referrals for Walsall Town Centre as a whole, of which 25% were from the ethnic community. With regard to school activities, prior to April of this year, there was one person working from Addaction. In addition, the Drugs Action Team had been commissioned to do 'Drugs Education in Schools' - a programme of drugs education. Alongside this, the Service would also arrange 'drop-ins' at hostels/schools and at the Service office in Jervis Court.

The point was made that it would be useful to know what agencies were working on these issues and to know the 'hot spots' in the LNP area. It was suggested that these points could be included in the Police presentation to the next LNP meeting.

The point was made that what Kevin's Team was doing was a small but very important part of partnership working. Kevin indicated that, in addition to drugs, his Team also dealt with alcohol and substance misuse and had links with GPs and the NHS.

In answer to a question regarding long term residential care, Kevin indicated that it was very rare for young people to get to this stage and pointed out that there were only three residential centres in the country. By way of clarification, Jane Evans (tPCT) made the point that there was a need to look at what was best for that particular child because they usually had multiple issues.

Margot Lambert (Caldmore Housing) indicated that there was a fair amount provided at the present time in relation to supported housing and care home units. Focus Housing will be providing 16 units and Caldmore Housing would be providing 6 units in conjunction with the Probation Unit and the Youth Offending Team.

It was suggested that there should be a general presentation by all other agencies, to the next meeting, in relation to supporting people, the presentation to be in conjunction with the Police presentation and to include points raised in this presentation.

Resolved

That officers be requested to arrange a general presentation by all other agencies in relation to supporting people, the presentation to be in conjunction with the police presentation on drugs issues in the area covered by the LNP and to include the points raised in the presentation by Mr. Woodhouse.

(b) In the area covered by the LNP

It was noted that the police presentation on this issue had been deferred to the November meeting of the Partnership.

142/06

LNP Funding

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The question was raised as to how organisations are made aware of the availability of funding. Narinder Singh Chumber (LNP Section) pointed out that it was important that the LNP Members went out and told groups about what was happening at the LNP meetings and asked that any Groups contact him direct.

He also asked that any further requests for litter bins be forwarded to him direct.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress on funding priorities 2005-2006 be noted;
- (2) That the current spend be noted;
- (3) That the criteria for the allocated 2006-2007 funding be noted;
- (4) That it be noted that the deadline for spend of 2006-2007 is 31st March, 2007;
- (5) That the following projects for funding from the new allocation be recommended:-
 - litter bin in Buchanan Avenue (£260)
 - environmental project (Jane Lane and Bentley Drive Schools and Reedswood Park) (£2000)

143/06

Community Action Groups

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That LNP Members continue in attendance at the Community Action Groups meetings;
- (2) That the progress of Community Action Groups be noted;

(3) That the Community Action Groups Chairs be appointed as follows:-

- Health and People - Jane Evans tPCT
- Safer and Stronger - Terry Edis

144/06 **Selection Panel for Locally Appointed Partners**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the selection panel comprise the following persons:-

Councillors Arif and Oliver

Jane Evans (tPCT)

Andrew Moulton (LAP)

CEN representative (awaiting CEN nomination)

145/06 **The former Mellish Road Methodist Church**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The point was made that this building was located on a gateway route into Walsall and the LNP needed to put pressure on Council officers to get the necessary work done and to set a timescale for key milestones to happen.

Mr. Alan Paxton (Fire Service) pointed out that this would have been dealt with by way of a Section 215 Notice within a 2 month period.

Keith Stone indicated that this was a serious situation but the owner of the Church was being unco-operative. Ultimately, the only way to resolve the issue could be by way of compulsory purchase. He would be speaking to Martin Yardley regarding the LNP's comments.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That it be noted that Keith Stone will be re-inforcing the LNP's views to Martin Yardley and seeking a timetable of events;
- (3) That the LNP be advised of this timetable as a matter of urgency;
- (4) That the Fire Service be asked to put whatever pressure it can on the owner to resolve the situation;
- (5) That an update on this issue be submitted to the November, 2006 meeting, the report to incorporate reference to Gladstone House, c/o Gladstone Street/Hospital Street and the Comfy Cushions premises, c/o Birchills Street/Hollyhedge Lane.

146/06

Date and venue of next meeting

Resolved

That the next meeting of the St. Matthews and Birchills/Leamore Local Neighbourhood Partnership be held on Thursday, 16th November, 2006 at the Central Methodist Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman

Date