

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

**Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 at 6.00 p.m.**

**at St. Mary the Mount Pastoral Centre, Glebe Street, Walsall**

## **Present**

Councillor Tim Oliver (Chairman)  
Mr. Terry Edis (Vice-Chair)  
Mrs. Jane Evans (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Mohammed Arif  
Councillor Joan Barton  
Mr. Malcolm Barton  
Inspector G. Bates  
Mr. Gary Brookes  
Inspector A. Bullman  
Mr. Hilson Carter  
Mr. Christopher Jones  
Mr. John Kempson  
Councillor Haqnawaz Khan  
Ms. Margot Lambert  
Mr. Andrew Moulton  
Mr. Aftab Nawaz  
Councillor Jonathan Phillips  
Rev. David Sims  
Mrs. Maureen Woodcock

## **173/07 Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Cain (LAP), Mr. Rod Dickson (CAP) and Councillor Barbara McCracken.

## **174/07 Declarations of Interest**

Mrs. Maureen Woodcock declared an interest in the Presentation on Foundation Trust in her capacity as Vice-Chairman of Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

## **175/07 Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted.

**Presentations****(i) Foundation Trust**

A copy of the presentation was submitted:-

(see annexed)

A presentation was given by Sarah Smith who referred to questions at the end of the presentation and asked for comments to be forwarded to her or Sarah Faulkner before the end of the consultation period. A public consultation document was circulated.

**Resolved**

That the presentation be noted.

**(ii) Guide Neighbourhoods**

It was noted that this item had been withdrawn.

**(iii) Restoration of the Arboretum**

A copy of the presentation was submitted:-

(see annexed)

A presentation was given by Louise Harris and Sam Mills.

Members were advised at the start of the presentation that the timescale for the submission of the bid had been brought forward from September, 2007 to March, 2007. The very tight timescale and competition from other Authorities may mean that the bid may not be approved in September. In this scenario, the bid would, however, be reconsidered in March, 2008, leading to a delay in project funding, not a bid rejection as reported in the press.

Louise Harris outlined the project and the timescale for consultation and responded to questions in relation to the greenhouses, tennis courts and toilets within the Arboretum, indicating that the toilets in the play area would be retained but would not form part of the current bid. She added that a 10 year management and maintenance plan would be required and there would be a need to outline revenue implications now.

On the question of security, she advised that there would possibly be CCTV around the Visitor Centre and there would be an increased staff presence in the Arboretum, including a new Parks Manager, Head Ranger and Head Gardener.

It was suggested that any income from the Illuminations should be ringfenced so that it could be used to refurbish the Arboretum.

In reply to a question regarding the numbers of visitors to the Arboretum and the numbers of volunteers, Louise indicated that she was unable to give figures but, with regard to visitors, the possibility of installing visitor counters was being considered.

Questions were raised regarding control of vehicular traffic and installation of cycle paths. In reply, Louise indicated that while there were no proposals at present regarding cycle paths, there was a proposal to restrict vehicular traffic to the Arboretum by closing the gate at Arboretum Road, creating a separate pedestrian access and encouraging visitors to park at the Grange car park.

On the question of funding, there were strong links between this project and the Green Bridge Project. Louise indicated that she did not anticipate refusal of funding, the worst scenario would be a delay in approval of funding. A master plan is in place for the Council to aspire to. If lottery funding was not available, the plan could be broken down into manageable projects, however, this would obviously be a longer process. The HLF funded Parks for People Programme is currently the biggest single funding source available for parks and it is important that this bid is of high quality.

She went on to say that there were no plans to restore the greenhouses at the present time, although there were proposals to introduce demonstration gardens. An apprenticeship scheme was to be introduced and, if successful, the possibility of providing plants for the rest of the Borough would be investigated.

In responding to questions from the Chair, Louise indicated that the Council would be required to contribute 25% towards the funding of the Head Ranger post, Arboretum Manager post and Project Manager post for 5 years and 4 years respectively.

In conclusion, she indicated that any comments made at tonight's meeting would be fed into a consultation report. Contact details were contained in the presentation and also on the Council's website.

### **Resolved**

That the presentation be noted.

177/07

### **Minutes**

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2007, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **Progress report**

### **Gladstone House**

Concern was expressed regarding lack of progress on this issue. Keith Stone pointed out that there was one outstanding issue in the terms of covenant which Caldmore Housing had asked to be removed. The Council had agreed and was now proceeding with the disposal. Margot Lambert indicated that Caldmore Housing hoped to complete the sale by the end of the month but would remain responsible for clearing the site. She indicated that it was always the intention of Caldmore Housing to sell the building but could not say whether it would be to a local developer.

### **Former Mellish Road Methodist Church**

The point was made that this was a main gateway into Walsall and needed to be sorted out as a priority.

Keith Stone gave a brief history of action taken by the Council in relation to this issue and pointed out that officers dealing with this matter were constantly being reminded that this was a priority. He asked for patience to allow the Council to get through the necessary procedures needed to bring this project to fruition. The statutory process could take in the region of 2 years.

The point was also made that this issue was urgent, however, the owners would be preparing a report indicating whether it would be viable to save the building and there was also a need to convince English Heritage. It was understood that a planning application was being prepared but it needed to be acceptable to all concerned, including the Council and residents.

### **Derelict flats above shops in Stephenson Square**

Keith Stone indicated that he had discussed this issue with Estates who had been in touch with BCHA with a view to pushing this forward.

### **Resolved**

That the progress report be noted and that officers be requested to provide a further update on the issue of derelict flats above shops in Stephenson Square, at the next meeting of the LNP.

*At this juncture, Councillor Khan declared an interest in the next item on the agenda due to the fact that he was the owner of a property in Caldmore. He withdrew from the meeting.*

## **Environmental Issues in Caldmore**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Glyn Oliver presented the report and referred to possible alternative solutions to the problems. He welcomed any comments from the local community which might assist.

Various suggestions were put forward, including a shuttle bus system, a no-entry sign from The Green into Caldmore Road prohibiting vehicles other than buses turning right, upgrading the condition and security of car parks in the area and better enforcement of the Traffic Regulations in the area.

Glyn indicated that there would be a consultation session before any scheme was advertised where residents and businesses could discuss the situation with officers. It was anticipated that a scheme would be in place during the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

The point was made that a one-way system was implemented in Caldmore Road last year but only for a few days. There had been no problems with the traffic flow, which provided proof that a one-way system would work.

The point was also made that enforcement of Traffic Regulations was currently a Police responsibility but would transfer to the Local Authority next year. It was suggested that Community Wardens could take on the responsibility. The LNP was advised that the Traffic Management Act only allowed Wardens to look at vehicles and nothing else.

Another possible solution put forward was to limit traffic through Caldmore to people using the businesses.

### **Resolved**

That it be noted that officers will take on board the suggestions made and arrange the widest possible consultation on this issue with residents and traders.

179/07

### **Public Forum**

- (i) Maureen Woodcock indicated that the road was closed giving access only at the bottom of Birmingham Road leading up to St. Matthews Church. She requested that the wording of the notice be changed to indicate that St. Matthews Church is still open for business.

## **Resolved**

That officers investigate this issue and rectify the situation as necessary.

### **(ii) Mr. A. Chand**

Mr. Chand referred to shops on Caldmore Road and the car park on Mount Street. The service road was not part of the public highway but was still owned by the Council. It was constantly being blocked by a nearby taxi firm. There were no parking restrictions in force.

He referred to a letter from Steve Law (Estates) indicating that the Council was trying to establish who is responsible.

He asked if it was possible to have more car park signage to include locations of nearby car parks, this to be put at the main car park in Caldmore.

The Chair indicated that a letter had been sent to the taxi firm in question regarding the issues raised asking them to cease the activity. It was suggested that the traders should get together and meet with the owner of the taxi firm to try to sort the problem out.

## **Resolved**

That a progress report on these issues be prepared for submission to the next meeting of the LNP.

### **(iii) Terry Edis**

A report on policing was requested for submission to the relevant CAG.

180/07

## **LNP Funding**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The issue of youth provision in the Butts area was raised, in particular, the use of Local Authority car park 'after hours'.

The Chair referred to "Transforming Youth Work" and indicated that it was now a responsibility of the Council to include sports and cultural activities.

Reference was also made to the lack of facilities for performing arts for youngsters in LNP area.

**Resolved**

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That a progress report on the issue of youth provision in the Butts area be submitted to the next meeting of the LNP;
- (c) That the issue of "Transforming Youth Work" be revisited at the first meeting of the LNP in the new Municipal Year;
- (d) That officers be requested to advise on the facilities provided for performing arts for youngsters in the LNP area.

181/07

**Community Action Groups**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

**Resolved**

That progress of Community Action Groups be noted and that LNP Members continue to attend Community Action Group meetings.

182/07

**Date and venue of next meeting**

That it be noted that the next meeting of the St. Matthews and Birchills/Leamore Local Neighbourhood Partnership will be held on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 at 6.00 p.m. at the Community Room, Burrowes Street, Walsall.

**Termination of Meeting**

The meeting terminated at 8.05 p.m.

Chairman .....

Date .....