

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE YOUTH FORUM HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES,  
WIGSTON ON 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2008**

Present: Councillors R E R Morris - Chairman

Councillors: L A Bentley, Mrs S A Dickinson, C S Gore, J Kaufman, K J Loydall, Mrs S B Morris and Mrs R I Sylvester (8)

Officers in Attendance: Mrs J York and D Allen

Also in Attendance: T Brewin, H Britt, T Brooke, J Crane, M Elton, H Gask, N Gray, J Hunter, J Richardson and Police Representatives – PC 591 A Bagley and PCSO 6680 S Burns

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor P Hings

**30. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That, subject to the following corrections, the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 15 January 2008 be taken as read, confirmed and signed:-

- At minute 23 the word "Priority" be corrected to read "Priorities".
- At minute 28, it had been Councillor Bentley who had proposed a grant for Wigston Club for Young People (Councillor Mrs Broadley had not been in attendance at the meeting).

**31. HEAR BY RIGHT**

The Chair introduced Susannah Jordan, a Consultant engaged by the Council, who addressed the meeting to report on the progress being made by the Council in meeting the requisite national Hear by Rights Standards. Throughout a period of four days and with the Council, Ms Jordan had been able to make an assessment of the Council's compliance with the seven different elements of the basic, emerging status. Full compliance would have to be achieved by next year.

In taking Members through each of the seven elements in turn, Ms Jordan commended the Council for the manner in which it engages young people, especially through the Youth Forum. It had been noted that the Council had limited resources and yet it was still able to make significant achievements. Particular mention was made of the proposed development of a guide to ensure systems were in place to regularise and regulate contact with young persons. The Council's annual award for Young Citizen of the Year was also highlighted. It was anticipated that a final report would be presented to the Council in July. The Committee heard how the Hear by Right Policies would differ from those other policies relating to young persons recently approved by the Council's Policy Committee. An action plan would be devised to ensure matters progressed satisfactorily.

RESOLVED: That, in noting the update, it be agreed that the matter be brought before the Youth Forum again prior to its passage to a Full Council meeting, preferably in the form of an executive summary for ease of reference.

Ms Jordan left the meeting at this point (7.18 pm).

**32. MEDIA ASSISTANCE - UPDATE**

The Committee welcomed the Reports of the two Media Assistants, including their coverage of Multicultural events, Christmas Capers, Young Citizen of the Year, the Senior Citizen's concert and tree planting at Peace Memorial Park. Mention was also made of the forthcoming Youth Edition of Letterbox.

**33. YOUTH DIRECTORY - UPDATE**

Attention was drawn to Report pages 79-81 which comprised the forms recently distributed in order to collect and collate information for the improved Youth Directory, with a final version being printed in July. It was also intended to expand the advice section of the Directory. The finished product would then be available on the Council's website. To date, there had been a very good response from those who had been contacted and a supply of forms was available at the meeting for anyone present to take with them.

**34. SALVATION ARMY YOUTH ZONE - UPDATE**

To supplement her address to the Meeting, Ms Gask subsequently submitted a written report of the events occurring at the Youth Zone. For the records, the report is incorporated with these minutes, as set out in report pages 81 (a) – (d). Particular mention was made of the re-introduction of the membership packs and the benefits that have resulted. It was intended to allocate a 30 minute slot at the end of each club session to have "live" presentations and performances, especially to invite guest speakers to address club members eg Torch for the Blind. It was a current aim of the Club to get young people not only to appreciate things that they have and enjoy, but also to understand that others may not be so fortunate. Mention was made of the contact with South Wigston High School with a view to forging useful relationships.

Looking ahead to the introduction of the "live session" mentioned above, the Police and a number of Councillors present at the meeting gladly volunteered to make visits to the Club as guest speakers.

**35. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS – UPDATE AND WIGSTON CLUB FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE**

In view of the overlap between the two agenda items, the Chair took the matters together. The meeting welcomed PC Alan Bagley and PCSO Sue Burns, who had come along to the meeting to provide Members with a summary of the work of the Police, mainly in the Wigston area. The Forum heard that the Police had planned to visit Abington and Bushloe schools to talk on the subject of Anti-Social Behaviour, but from an educational and informative perspective. It was explained that the reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour on Little Hill Estate had seen something of a corresponding increase in the Wigston Town Centre. The improvements on the Little Hill Estate were confirmed by Councillor Bentley.

PC Bagley referred to the production and distribution of some 10,500 leaflets to introduce local residents to the police personnel working in the District and also their roles and responsibilities. It was pleasing to note that incidents involving Guthlaxton students had also reduced though the Police asked if all could remain vigilant and let them know of any problems. Councillor Bentley advised the meeting that the new head teacher at Guthlaxton had restricted all students, other than sixth formers, from leaving the school grounds. Mention was made of the Political Speed Dating events and the issues then raised by young people especially in regard to being asked to move on by the Police. PC Bagley commented on the manner in which he approached such circumstances, but other officers may act differently. It was explained that the Police felt compelled to respond to reports made to them by residents but accepted that there were times when no action was called for on their part. The Forum generally felt that it was helpful for the Police to explain to the youngsters the reasons for the call out to obtain a better mutual understanding.

Jean Crane and Mark Elton, representatives of Wigston Club for Young People, spoke of the recent contacts made by the Police. Mention was made of the presence of the Beat Bus outside Little Hill shops. Subsequently, the Police had been in touch with the Wigston Club with offers to help out and encourage youngsters to make better use of the Clubhouse and its facilities.

Discussion turned to the improvements to the Clubhouse and the intention to have clearer and better signage at the premises. The suggestion was made that local schools could become involved with this signage by way of a competition, including proposals for a change of name. The opportunity was taken to thank the Council for the two generous grants recently made to the Club. The Forum was given a potted history of the Club since its formation in the 1960's and the part played by the former Wigston UDC in earmarking land for the erection of the Clubhouse. Mention was made of lease arrangements for the land and this was a subject which would need to be revisited if the Clubhouse was to remain in place rather than make way for replacement facilities.

The meeting heard that the metal cladding at the Clubhouse had become dented through vandalism and had also suffered from graffiti. The Forum learned in more detail of the use to which the grants had been put in terms of purchasing electrical goods and improvements to heating and flooring. The Mayor suggested that the Club might approach the Council with a view to acquiring some spare goal posts. The Club expressed appreciation for the services of a worker from Remploy who had redecorated the majority of the inside of the Clubhouse. The Club recognised the need to improve the outside of the building and the grounds, particularly the removal of unsightly concrete fence posts.

Councillor Mrs Morris advised that new signage might need planning permission and that a volunteer, perhaps, could remove the concrete posts. Mention was made of a contact who might provide the means to deal with the dents in the cladding. In her capacity as Asset Management Champion, Councillor Mrs Morris commented that possible lease arrangements could be considered along with other matters during the impending asset review.

**36. YOUTH FORUM DVD**

In introducing the DVD to the Forum, James Hunter commented that the Council should be commended for the support given to the Jitty Initiative. The DVD, in this first draft, showed scenes of recreational activities around the Borough and also depicted how the Council, volunteers, Youth Forum Representatives and young people engage in the community. The intention to distribute the DVD to local schools was noted. The meeting examined a sample DVD cover and font styles to be used in its production.

Councillor Mrs Dickinson requested that there be greater coverage of matters relating to Oadby, especially the Youth Bus. Judy Richardson, the South Area Officer for the County Council's Youth Service, suggested that the DVD could include reference to the two groups of students at Beauchamp College who were undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Ms Gask would be pleased to show the DVD at the Youth Zone, but would prefer a version condensed to, say, three minutes, rather than the full length version.

**37. BROCKS HILL NATURAL PLAY AREA – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Forum heard that work on the proposed Play Area would commence in mid-May and should be completed by August this year. Plans and drawings of the layout of equipment were circulated at the meeting.

Prior to dealing with the next agenda item, the Chair took the opportunity to introduce Mr Tim Brooke, the Locality Partnership Co-ordinator, based at the Council offices. After briefly explaining his role and function, Mr Brooke commented that he would attend the next meeting of the Forum with the intention of making a short presentation.

**38. YOUTH FORUM GRANTS SCHEME**

The Chair was minded to defer consideration of this item in the absence of Alan Wood, who would normally speak to the Forum in detail about Grant Applications. However, attention was drawn to the balance of approximately £150 remaining in the Youth Forum Grants Scheme which, if not spent, would normally be returned to balances, or donated to the Mayor's Charity or donated to the Mablethorpe Children's Home. Reference was made to the ongoing needs of the Wigston Club for Young People, at which point the representatives from the Club vacated the Chamber. Upon a motion by Councillor K J Loydall, seconded by Councillor Mrs S A Dickinson and duly carried (Councillor Mrs S B Morris abstaining), it was

RESOLVED: That a further grant be made to the Wigston Club for Young People in the sum of £150, to be applied to further improvements at the premises.

**39. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE YOUTH FORUM**

Consideration was given to the Annual Report of the Youth Forum as set out in report pages 82-84, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the following corrections, the Annual Report be received and approved:-

- At page 83, the word “Jetty” should read “Jitty”.
- At page 84, the Political Speed Dating event took place at the Holmden Avenue Youth Facility, not the Council Chamber.

**40. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a) Salvation Army – Funding Application

Ms Gask reminded the Forum of the funding received last year towards a soccer weekend, involving approximately 40 youngsters, who received high quality training from Football Association representatives at Guthlaxton College. For the scheme to operate this year, it was explained that there would be a deficit in the region of £1,000 which the Church would be prepared to pay the full amount but would appreciate any level of support from the Council. The Chairman provided a breakdown of costings. Jacky York suggested that funding might be met out of the Youth Diversionary Budget with some assistance, perhaps, from other sources managed by Avril Lennox. The Chairman moved that a grant of £250 be made to the Salvation Army towards the soccer weekend. Councillor K J Loydall seconded the motion which was duly carried.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £250 be made, as detailed above, out of 2008/09 budget(s).

b) Previous Matters Arising

The Mayor raised again the future of the Scout hut at St. Peters Path, Oadby. The Forum received an update of the current position regarding the lease of the land and how its future would need to be considered in much the same way as Councillor Mrs Morris had mentioned earlier at the meeting in terms of the asset review. Reference was made to the possibility of funds being made available to upgrade buildings for community use either through Village Hall Fund Grants or by contacting Mr Bob Mitchell.

c) Political Speed Dating Events

Councillor Mrs Morris referred to a local press article where North West Leicestershire DC had claimed to have held the first Political Speed Dating event in the county and yet the Political Speed Dating event held at the Youth service Conference at Holmden Avenue on 20<sup>th</sup> March was not publicised. Judy Richardson offered a possible explanation in that Youth Service publicity matters had to be channelled through the County Council's Media Officers, including all press releases.

During his attendances at the Youth Forum, the Mayor had become aware of the various bodies who performed functions across the Borough in connection with services for young. However, there seemed occasions when there appeared to be a lack of co-ordination, generally. With this in mind, the Mayor suggested that the subject of Youth Services, including the work of the Youth Forum, be reviewed by the Council's Scrutiny Panel; such a review might help to rationalise youth services in the Borough and clarify the recognition due to each body. James Hunter commented on the manner in which he prepared his reports, etc, ensuring that the Council is given due recognition for its work.

d) 637 Bus - Leaflet

In bringing the meeting to a close, the Chair circulated a leaflet drawing attention to the presence of the 637 Bus at Sandhurst Street, Oadby. The bus is used by youngsters for social and recreational activities, with experienced Youth Workers present to give information and advice on various topics. The bus is stationed at Sandhurst Street on Monday evenings between 6.30 pm and 8.30 pm and is intended for youngsters aged 11 years plus.

The leaflet drew attention to organised events, including barbecues and subsidised trips to Alton Towers, Nottingham Ice Rink and Tamworth Snow Dome. Further information can be obtained on the Council's web site.

**The meeting closed at 8.45 pm**