

**Statement from AC (Age Concern)**  
**Received 3 May 2012-05-03**

Further to the Pre Hearing Meeting I would like to address the following points.

Having referred to the 'Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008' and the 'Leicestershire Supporting People' Revised Version 4, Appendix A, I would like to point out that both these documents support my objections.

My original letter (8<sup>th</sup> December 2011) made it clear that Age Concern Oadby and Wigston is a facility for the community. What I didn't perhaps include is the fact that we also provide a centre for evening use by the wider adult community. This particular point would address the objectives on page 40 of the Oadby and Wigston AAP. Many local groups use the Centre to hold meetings on a weekly basis and others use the facilities on a regular/ annual basis for celebrations and craft fairs etc. One of the main reasons for the booking of our rooms is the closeness to parking spaces for both the groups and their supporters. Very few people would be encouraged to attend a fund raising fair if they had to walk from the other side of the town. Assuming that they are relatively mobile in the first place. There is no other convenient centre, with parking spaces in close proximity, with rooms available to other charities and community groups for this type of booking within the town centre. The use of the centre in the evenings would seem to address the AAP requirement for positive 'night time economy' use.

The AAP objectives also require that we 'encourage the growth and social benefits for local people by providing service facilities (p40) and the use of our Day Centre by the local community would seem to address this point. The car park close by is a major factor in this.

As an over-view of the AAP objectives I would like to point out that, despite the development of a successful business environment, many commercial organisations come and go with the general changes in demand but the provision of a Day Centre for the local community, as offered by Age Concern Oadby and Wigston, is permanent. We have been here for thirty four (34) years and have currently no plans to move. Unless forced to do so by poor access.

Objective 4 of the AAP is to provide a 'safe' town centre and this can be supported by retention of the car park on Paddock Street. Our elderly clients are not able to walk far, even if they can drive, and the convenience of the car park is vital. They are able to cross a relatively quiet road at the crossing path and can take their time doing so. As we are on the outskirts of the town many people who come to the shop also do so because of the convenience of the car park. Either because they are already using the car park for shopping generally or so that they can drop off donations to our shop. They would be less likely to support us

if they had to carry potentially heavy boxes and bags from Burgess Street or other more remote car parks (AAP objective 2).

As a Day Centre we also provide for objective 5 of the AAP as we are an 'attractive and accessible place' for shopping, working and visiting. If we don't have the car park facility then we will be effectively cut off from the main footfall traffic of the town centre as they would have no convenient place to park and access our building.

We are often an impulse purchase facility and the general public use the Coffee Shop when arriving at the car park or leaving after using the retail centre. We rely on the general public accessing our Coffee Shop for supplementary income and cannot afford to lose this support. Our economical prices are a very attractive asset to local residents when incomes are tight (AAP objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5).

I sincerely hope that I have presented a case for the retention of the car park on Paddock Street, even for it's extension rather than removal. I believe that this aspect of the AAP is definitely not 'Justified' (4.1.2.) or 'Effective' (4.1.3.) when the above remarks are taken into consideration. I also recognise that the above points are supported by the 'Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy' document and the 'Leicestershire Supporting People' document which address the point 4.1.4. 'Consistent with national policy...'

I look forward to the revision of the AAP and would like to speak in support of my argument at the Hearing on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June and look forward to welcoming the Inspector to the Age Concern Oadby and Wigston Day Centre on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June, during the site visit.