

NEW FRANKLEY IN BIRMINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council held at St Christopher's Church Centre, Holly Hill, Frankley on Monday, 16 October 2006 at 1930 hours.

Present

Councillors Ian Bruckshaw, Eric Carter, Michael Denny, Sid Grey MBE, Len Lovett, Geoffrey Stephenson, Stephen Trefor-Jones, Joanna Walker and Geoffrey Williams

Also in Attendance Parveen Akhtar, Policy Manager, Housing Needs, Housing Department, Birmingham City Council
Lisa Barcroft, Brightstone Road, Frankley
Councillor Sue Barton, Longbridge Ward Councillor
David Grant, Brightstone Road, Frankley
Peter Hughes, RailFuture

MINUTES

In the absence of the Chairperson the Vice-Chairperson, Councillor Carter, took the Chair.

COUNCILLOR CARTER IN THE CHAIR

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Linda Banks (Family Illness), Gareth Griffiths (Attendance at Standards Conference) and Bill Hollis (Holiday).

MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Lovett, and -

- 1419 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 18 September 2006, having previously been circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service – Service Review

The Chairperson reported that the Parish Council had received a request from

the Constituency office to nominate a Member to serve on the Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service Review Team. Hereon the Clerk advised that Councillor Griffiths had indicated his willingness to serve on the team and, there being no other nominations, it was –

- 1420 RESOLVED: That, for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2007, Councillor Gareth Griffiths be nominated to serve on the Constituency's Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service Review Team.

QUESTIONS

There were none.

REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Longbridge Ward Committee

- 1421 The Clerk reported that, at the September meeting of the Ward Committee, the application submitted by the Reaside Management Committee for NRF Funding for improvements to the Centre's kitchen had been approved.

Councillor Sue Barton added that the Management Committee were awaiting the result of an Asbestos Survey which had been undertaken at the Centre and that, prior to the necessary works being undertaken on the kitchen, the outstanding repairs to the roof and interior ceiling were to be carried out and the entrance foyer re-carpeted. This much needed work would provide a welcoming environment to the Centre.

Councillors Grey and Stephenson requested that they be kept informed as to the outcome of the survey referred to due to their work at the Centre.

COMMUNICATIONS

A Tenancy Allocations – Teenagers

It was agreed to defer consideration of this item pending the arrival of Ms Parveen Akhtar, Policy Manager, Housing Needs, who had agreed to attend the meeting but had advised that due to another engagement, might be late.

B Ormond Road, Frankley

The following letter from Inspector Mayhew regarding traffic calming measures on Ormond Road was submitted –

(Interleaved document no.1)

- 1422 The Clerk reported that Richard Burden MP had called a meeting of interested parties to discuss, on site, possible traffic calming measures which could be introduced on Ormond Road to slow down traffic. Following that meeting, the Constituency Engineer would prepare a report for consideration by the Highways Engineers as part of next year's budgetary process. If, after consideration of the circumstances, it was felt that Ormond Road warranted

expenditure on Traffic Calming measures, the Constituency Engineer would be allocated funding which would be used to fund measures to slow the traffic down on Ormond Road to the best advantage.

Councillor Stephenson expressed concern that more local residents together with the other emergency services and representatives of the bus companies who would be affected by any measures introduced on the road, had not been invited to the meeting.

Councillor Trefor-Jones expressed his disappointment at the dismissive tone of Inspectors Mayhew's letter which he would be taking up with the Inspector through the Police Liaison Committee. He added that he had only learnt of the meeting after the event and he felt that members of the Police Liaison Committee and the Forum should have been invited. Accordingly he asked that the Clerk write to Inspector Mayhew regarding his letter and to Richard Burden expressing the Council's disappointment that members of the Police Liaison Committee and the Forum were not invited to the meeting.

Councillor Grey was also disappointed with Inspector Mayhew's letter which appeared to give the impression that the damage caused by the three non-fatal accidents was minor. Given that, in each case, a property boundary wall had been demolished, Councillor Grey was of the opinion that, whilst in human terms the damage was minor, in terms of damage to property, major damage had been caused in the three accidents. Councillor Grey went on to point out that in other Authorities, experimental traffic calming measures were introduced in order to gauge their effectiveness but in Birmingham permanent traffic calming measure were introduced with no trial evaluation of their effectiveness – the speed bumps on New Street were an example of measures not being properly evaluated; they patently were not effective as drivers drove through the gap between the cushions with little or no diminution of speed. Given the speed of all vehicles on the estate's roads, he urged that action be taken to slow down all traffic.

Councillor Trefor-Jones suggested, and it was agreed, that the Clerk write to Inspector Mayhew requesting that he re-look at the accident statistics for the last three years which was when the Police Liaison Committee originally started expressing concern about speeding. Additionally, the Clerk write to Richard Burden expressing the Council's concern that representatives of the Police Liaison Committee and the Forum had not been invited to the meeting.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

Christmas Lights Competition

Councillor Carter referred to the Christmas lights which residents had put up in previous years and he felt the proposal was worth supporting as he considered that the initiative would promote community spirit. However, Councillor Trefor-Jones felt that the proposal was not environmental friendly despite the offer of a low energy light bulb to every entrant and, in his opinion it discriminated against those households which could not afford Christmas decorations. However, the majority view was that the proposal was worth pursuing if only as a pilot for the forthcoming Christmas and, on a show of hands, it was, with Councillor Trefor-Jones voting against the following

resolution -

- 1423 RESOLVED: That, the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, agree to incur the following expenditure, £100 to provide the expenses and prize fund for the Frankley Christmas Lights Competition 2006.

At this point in the meeting, Ms Parveen Akhtar, having arrived, it was agreed to consider Agenda Item 7A

Tenancy Allocations – Teenagers

The following letter from Ms Akhtar in response to the letter from the Parish Council was submitted –

(see interleaved document no 2)

- 1424 In response to Member's questions regarding the problems of homelessness in relation to young adults, Ms Akhtar stated that the Housing Department operated a mediation service which explained to the young adult's parents the problems which could arise as a result of homelessness and which tried to encourage parents to keep the young adult within the family home. However, if the problem involved a young adult with a child or children which often led to overcrowding in the family home, such cases were dealt with as a priority. Homelessness was dealt with by the Department within the provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002 and in those cases where the young person was under the age of 18, he or she was treated as a homeless priority and placed in supported accommodation.

Councillor Grey then referred to the problems currently being experienced by some Frankley residents because of the Housing Department's policy of putting young men, with little or no home making skills, into flats without having the resources to support them. He referred to a recent incident in which the porch to a flat was firebombed at 4.20pm which had, quite naturally, caused extreme concern amongst those neighbours living close to the flat. Additionally, he was concerned that it appeared that the police did not routinely advise the local housing office should there be problem with a tenant in which the police were involved. The situation seemed to be getting worse and he questioned what measures the Housing Department were putting in place to address the problem. The Parish Council and other agencies on Frankley were trying to improve area but the recent incidents were having a negative effect. Part of the problem was that the Housing Department were offering tenancies to young, vulnerable, adults without being able to offer them the proper support because of a shortage of Tenancy Support Officers.

Councillor Denny suggested that the problem was not so much a housing problem but society's. The Housing Department were being required to house an increasing number of vulnerable young adults and he felt that sometimes monitoring the situation was not enough – it needed an inter-agency approach to put in place initiatives to stop young people becoming a problem.

In response Ms Akhtar advised that she directed as to how Housing Policy should be implemented having regard to the requirements of current

legislation – however, the instances of Anti Social Behaviour evidenced by Council Grey were matters for the local housing team to deal with. With regard to liaison with the police, the police would only advise the local housing team if they had visited a property because of an alleged drugs/firearms offence – if the visit concerned other matters such as driving offences, anti-social behaviour, it was possible that the police would not contact the local housing team. However, if any tenant was found guilty in the courts of continued Anti Social Behaviour then that tenancy would be brought to an end. She added that the problem which Members had raised where not just a Frankley issue they were City wide. Finally, she agreed to arrange with the Clerk to attend another meeting accompanied by the local housing officer although they would not be able to discuss individual cases but would be willing to discuss the application of policy.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT – 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

The following report of the Clerk setting out the Council's Income and Expenditure was submitted –

(see Interleaved document no 3)

Following a brief introductory commentary it was –

1425 RESOLVED: That the report, as now submitted, be noted.

DRAFT BUDGET 2007/2008

The following report of the Clerk was submitted –

(see interleaved document no 4)

The Clerk explained that the draft budget assumed the Council would be undertaking the same level of activities during the forthcoming year together with an increase for inflation and other costs. Members were requested to consider the draft budget and put forward suggestion for additional activities which could perhaps be included in next years budget.

In response to Councillor Trefor-Jones' request that the Council include an additional Bulk Collection next year, the Clerk advised that, when the proposal was last considered, given that the cost of a collection was approximately £6,000 and bearing in mind the low take up of the City Council organised Bulk Collection and the fact that residents could organise an individual collection by telephoning the City's call centre, it was longer felt to represent value for money.

Councillor Denny requested that consideration be give to a grant to the Children's Centre to assist in the start-up costs of community groups. The Clerk suggested that the Centre's manager contact him to discuss the matter. Additionally, Councillor Denny referred to the success of the recent 12 week Teenage Pregnancy Course run by Wendy Saunders, the Project's Social Worker. Due to its success, Wendy had been asked to run further courses and Councillor Denny questioned whether funding would be available to the Project to cover the costs of employing a part-time replacement for Wendy while she

was running the courses. The Chairperson indicated that Councillor Denny should approach Veronica Coleman with a view to making an application to the NRF fund.

- 1426 RESOLVED: That the draft budget for 2007/2008 and the associated documents be noted and referred to Members for further consideration with a view to submitting, by the next meeting of the Parish Council, a budget incorporating Members' suggestions, for formal approval.

PLANNING APPLICATION

There were none.

DECISIONS MADE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

S/05255/06/NOT

Installation of 12 metre high imitation lighting column supporting two antennae with equipment cabinets and ancillary works Arden Road, opposite to Arden Business Park

- 1427 Members were advised that the above mentioned application had been refused for the reasons set out in the attached document –

(Interleaved document no 5)

FRANKLEY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

- 1428 The Clerk reported that the inaugural meeting of the Frankley Implementation Group (FIG) had been held the previous week. The City's Development Officers' Group had considered the proposals for the development of the Centre in September and had approved that 2nd Option be proceeded with. FIG would be preparing a development brief for the Centre and undertaking a consultation process.

CROSS CITY LINE EXTENSION

- 1429 The Chairperson welcomed Mr Peter Hughes of RailFuture to the meeting.

Mr Hughes stated that on the positive side, although the question of the re-instatement of the Frankley rail link had gone very quiet in recent months, St Modwen's involvement in the development of the Longbridge site was to be welcomed as it had been involved in rail re-opening in other parts of the country.

However, on the negative side, he had recently received a letter from the Senior Development Surveyor of St Modwen from which it appeared that St Modwen was supporting the provision of a rapid bus link between Frankley and Longbridge as, in the opinion of St Modwen, the retention of the rail link presented problems which could effect the overall development of the Longbridge site. Therefore, while the re-instatement of the rail link was still to be decided, St Modwen's preferred option would be the provision of a high speed bus link which would both add to and greatly benefit the proposed

development of the Longbridge site and support the vision of a new heart to Longbridge. This could include a new bus/rail interchange around the current station at Longbridge.

Hover, Councillor Grey considered that the proposed bus was a non-starter as, residents when faced with the choice of catching a bus to the station and then catching a train or catching a bus into the City centre invariably opted for the latter option. He was concerned that, from the tone of Mr Murray's letter, it would appear that the decision had already been taken by St Modwen not to proceed with the rail link. Additionally, he considered that the decision as to whether or not to re-instate the rail link was not one for St Modwen' to make but one for CENTRO given their role in transport provision. With regard to the proposition that Section 106 would fund the rapid bus service and the bus/rail interchange, Councillor Grey considered that the bus service did not offer the same level of economic benefits as did the rail link. Following the demise of employment opportunities at Longbridge, there was now a lack of 'traditional jobs' in the southwest of Birmingham which meant that, in order to find employment, Frankley residents had to travel to the Black Country, East Birmingham or Coventry and accordingly needed to travel those areas by train. In his opinion the proposed bus link would not benefit Frankley and that a re-instated rail line was important economically.

Following some further discussion it was proposed by Councillor Grey, and agreed, that the Council write to St Modwen setting out its support for the re-instatement of the rail link and its importance to Frankley.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

There were none.

PAYMENTS

(i) Business Visa Credit Card

The following Business Visa Credit Card Statement was submitted -

(Interleaved document no 6)

It was proposed by Councillor Grey, seconded by Councillor Joanna Walker, and -

- 1430 RESOLVED: That the VISA Credit Card Statement, as now submitted, be approved.

(ii) Schedule of Payments

The following Schedule of Payments was submitted -

(Interleaved document no 7)

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Stephenson, and -

- 1431 RESOLVED: That the payments, as set out in the Schedule now submitted, be approved.

LOCAL ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

At 2105 hours, the meeting adjourned to enable the Members of the Public to raise issues of concern.

Anti Social Behaviour – Brightstone Road

Hereon, Ms Barcroft and Mr Grant referred to a number of recent instances of Anti Social Behaviour which had taken place in the area around the bungalows in Brightstone Road. On one occasion, an elderly resident being subjected to such behaviour had rung the police but had been told that no officer would attend but was given a crime number. Councillor Trefor-Jones, Chair of the local Police Liaison Committee offered to speak with both residents following the meeting as he would be taking the matter up with the police. Additionally, the Chairperson requested that either Ms Barcroft or Mr Grant come to the parish office, when he could provide details as to how to contact the Birmingham Anti Social Behaviour Unit which dealt with Anti Social behaviour involving owner occupiers.

There being no further issues to be raised by the public the meeting was reconvened at 2110 hours

The meeting ended at 2110 hours

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Chairperson