

## NEW FRANKLEY IN BIRMINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Planning, Environmental, Highways and Public Transport Committee held on Monday, 2 October 2000, at 1934 hours at St Christopher's Church Centre, Holly Hill, New Street, Frankley.

### Present

Councillor Eric Carter (In the Chair)

Councillors David Burton, Sidney Grey, Paul Kane, Joanna Walker and Geoffrey Williams.

In attendance for the item on flooding in the Frankley area:

Ms Una O'Brien (Flood Co-ordinator, Birmingham City Council).

### APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

### MINUTES

- 9 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Environmental, Highways and Public Transport Committee held on 4 September 2000, having previously been circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were no planning applications to consider.

Councillor Grey requested, and it was:

- 10 RESOLVED: That future agendas include an item giving information on decisions made by the City Council on planning applications that had previously been referred to this Committee.

## FLOODING IN THE FRANKLEY AREA

Hereon, the Chairperson submitted a revised and updated Flood Management Action Plan –

(See interleaved document No. 1)

- 11 The Chairperson proceeded to give a brief account of the meeting of the Task Force Flood Management Committee held on 15 September. In particular he referred to some of the developments in the Action Plan, such as the appointment of a Flood Co-ordinator, the provision of doorstoppers for local residents, and the request for funding for a survey of the drains in the Frankley area. He advised that work had gone into setting up the procedures and that things should now start to happen. He encouraged Members to tell residents of the actions being taken.

Councillor Burton explained the new Environment Agency flood warning procedures and the three levels of warnings used - Flood Watch, Flood Warning, and Severe Flood Warning. He added that the area needed to have flood disaster plans in position. Part of those plans would involve a small number of people acting as voluntary contacts for the Environment Agency. The Agency would then advise those volunteers when there was a possibility of flooding. Those volunteers would then contact other people in their area in order that the appropriate action could be taken with particular attention paid to vulnerable areas with a history of flooding and vulnerable groups such as pensioners and people with disabilities. He emphasised the need for local residents to check watercourses on a regular basis so as to ensure there was no build up of debris. There was, therefore, a need to identify people in vulnerable areas who would be interested in keeping watch on the watercourses. Councillor Burton then submitted detailed maps of the area that indicated those properties that had been subjected to flooding -

(See interleaved document No.2)

In response to a question from a Member, it was made clear that the budget for doorstoppers was in the Housing Department that could only provide them free of charge to City Council tenants.

Councillor Grey made reference to the flooding problems on the east side of Frankley where foul water had become mixed with flood water and suggested that the problem needed to be remedied as a matter of urgency on health grounds.

Councillor Burton said that the maps showed a pattern with an area from Miranda Close to Cotswold Close being affected. It appeared that storm water from the fields behind Miranda Close was getting into the sewers, lifting manholes and causing foul waste to overflow.

The Chairperson made brief reference to the meeting of the Task Force on 29 September and he hoped that papers from that meeting would be available for the next meeting of this Committee. Referring to the work of the Task Force, he indicated that some Members were concerned at the lack of progress and the attention being given to the flooding problems experienced by residents of the Station Road/Middlemore Road area of Northfield to the detriment of other areas. He then introduced the newly-appointed Flood Co-ordinator, Ms Una O'Brien.

Ms O'Brien introduced herself and explained that she had only been in post for a few days. She explained that as a result of the initial meeting called by the local MP to look into the problems of flooding, two task forces had been set up to deal with the problem of flooding. The technical group led by the Transportation Department, which was preparing a bid for £100,000 to fund a detailed survey of the drains in Frankley and the residents' group on which the Parish Council was represented. She saw her job as balancing the needs of all the people involved. She was drawing up disaster plans and linking them to City Council departments and other agencies involved, to ensure that help was there for local people when it was needed. She added that she was working with Councillor Burton to get doorstoppers for local residents and she offered help with producing local newsletters to keep residents informed.

Councillor Kane said that the first priority must be to sort out the drains and sewers in the area. There was general agreement with this view.

### FRANKLEY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Grey distributed copies of the latest feasibility plan for the centre area -

(See interleaved document No. 3)

- 12 The Chairperson explained that Councillors Grey, Burton and himself had met with Mr. Gerry Pountney, the prospective developer and had been impressed with his energy and drive.

Councillor Grey then explained the concept of developing the whole centre as a retail and manufacturing area as he felt that, should the development be purely industrial then, given the number of vacant industrial units in south Birmingham, the project would fail. In the latest scheme, the shops and service area at the south end of the site had been reversed, so that the service area would be where the shoppers car park now was, and the proposed central car park would be surrounded by shops. That would form a town centre for the whole area. Additionally it was proposed remove the mound of earth in the centre of the site to provide extra car parking. He informed Members that he had

met Councillor Coulson, the City Council cabinet Member for Regeneration, on a recent visit to the site, and had emphasised to him that the scheme could regenerate an area currently in decline. He mentioned his concern at the site on Egghill Lane being included in a “high-tech” corridor and emphasised that development in the area must provide jobs for people with the skills possessed by Frankley residents.

Councillor Grey further suggested that the feasibility of the Parish Council assuming the ownership, with City Council approval, of the site proposed for the food retail store and the adjoining car park be investigated, to ensure that any money gained from its development was ploughed back into facilities for Frankley. The Clerk was requested to consult Mr. Thompson, the Clerk to Castle Bromwich Parish Council, which had experience of this kind of activity, to ascertain the legal procedures necessary for the Parish Council to assume ownership of the land.

In response to a question from Councillor Kane regarding the proposed units facing New Street, Councillor Grey said that the food store might expand in area up to 30,000 sq. ft and if that were the case then those units would not be built. He emphasised that the food retail store was the key to the whole development and the Parish Council needed to stress to all parties that the whole development, not just the industrial units, was needed. The scheme was to be submitted to the City Council’s Planning Department in the very near future, and the developer’s target was to start work by the end of the year. There was a need to talk to the City Council’s Economic Development Department about the possibility of Single Regeneration Budget funding for the conversion of the former “Coldstream” public house, and possibly other parts of the development.

In response to a question regarding the loss of the public house facility, Councillor Grey said that the present trend is to do away with public houses on estates like Frankley. Additionally, given the problems in the past associated with the public house, the Police would object to the premises being re-licensed.

In conclusion, Councillor Grey stated that when the outline plans for the development were submitted, the Parish Council would need to organise public meetings to explain the scheme to local residents and listen to their views.

#### EXTENSION OF THE CROSS CITY LINE TO FRANKLEY

Hereon Councillor Grey submitted copies of -

- (i) a letter from Terry Holl of the Planning Department to Alan Bevan of the Railway Development Society dated 8 August 2000;
- (ii) Councillor Grey's letter to Chris Haynes of the Transportation Department of 23 August 2000;
- (iii) Mr. Haynes' reply to Councillor Grey of 31 August 2000;
- (iv) a letter from Richard Burden MP, on behalf of himself and the Ward Councillors, to Councillor Grey, dated 7 September 2000:-

(See interleaved documents Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7)

- 13 Councillor Grey spoke of the confusion caused by different reports covering the same topic. He referred to a recent meeting of the Ward Advisory Board at which it had been indicated that hopefully a decision on the extension would be made in the New Year.

Councillor Kane referred to opposition to the railway terminating at Arden Road and felt that a line terminating at Great Park was the right option. Councillor Grey replied that previous studies by Centro and the Passenger Transport Authority had found the scheme only marginally viable if it terminated at Great Park, but more viable if it ran through to Frankley.

Councillor Grey expressed some concern regarding the possibility of using the Rover car park in Longbridge Lane as a Park and Ride scheme for Longbridge Station. If that happened then he felt that there would be little possibility of the line being extended. There was some discussion of rail-bus interchange. Reference was made to the failure of this to develop when the Cross City line had originally been opened to Longbridge, and some Members expressed scepticism about it happening now. Passengers might prefer to take a bus all the way to the City centre once they had boarded it. Councillor Grey emphasised that the railway extension was an essential part of the regeneration proposals for the Frankley Centre.

The meeting ended at 2048 hours

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Chairperson