

Minutes of: **WHITEFIELD AND UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP FORUM**

Date of Meeting: 8 September 2015

Present: Councillor D Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors P Adams, R Caserta, E Fitzgerald, J Grimshaw,
J Mallon, M Whitby and M Wiseman

Advisory Group Representatives: Leonard Lott – Whitefield and Unsworth Homewatch Assn.
Marlene Dawson (Victoria Estate TRA)
Pamela Taylor (Hollins Village Community Assn) Yvonne
Moore (Old Hall Park Residents Assn)
Mrs S Bannister – Jewish Representative Council

Public Attendance: 33 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A Matthews and Mrs T Heyworth (ELMS TRA)

WUTF.273 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in relation to any items to be considered.

WUTF.274 MINUTES

An amendment was made to minute number WUTF.143 Public Question Time – Amend “St George’s Church” to read “St George’s playing field”.

Croft Lane road markings – no change reported.
Seat at Hamilton Park – no change reported.

Delegated decision:

That, subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

WUTF.275 FIRST BUS - UPDATE

Representatives from First Bus attended the meeting (Dave Rutherage, Alan Blackburn and Steve Shaw) to provide an update on First Bus services for the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

Service 95 – will now stop at Whitefield interchange. The service will also be a direct route to Manchester from Pendleton.

Service 97 – There has been an ongoing reliability issue for the service due in part to the congestion problems in Manchester City Centre as a consequence of Metrolink works and the sinkhole repairs on the Mancunian Way. The 97 and 98 services had been re-timed to give added flexibility for service users in Radcliffe and Whitefield. This has been reflected in user statistics.

Service 135 – following the comments made at a Township Forum meeting regarding the last bus from Bury on Friday and Saturday it was reported that there would be a late bus leaving Bury at 23:25 to Manchester. The return service would leave Manchester at 00:15 (Saturday and Sunday). The service from Manchester was being used by people returning to Bury and it was hoped that the number of users travelling from Bury to Manchester would increase to make the service viable and sustainable.

It was reported that an additional early morning service had been introduced on Sunday and Bank Holidays.

Service 95 – the hourly service around Sunnybank was not being used as anticipated and would be monitored. It was believed that the catchment area identified should ensure that the service would become viable.

Service 93 – the service will be extended from Carr Clough to the Prestwich Tesco store.

Service 94 – the public are requested to pass on any issues.

Mrs Taylor asked if there would be a Pilsworth service when the Pilsworth retail area site was redeveloped at some point and why had a bus stop been suspended?

It was stated that services would be investigated based on potential users and the needs of the area. The services to Pilsworth had been stopped for the reason that there were insufficient users of the service to make it sustainable. Bus stops were managed by Transport for Greater Manchester and the question would be passed on to the officer concerned for a response.

Service 95 – will be reintroduced in October 2015.

The Chair thanked the representatives from First Bus for their attendance and invited them to a future meeting of the Township Forum for further updates.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

WUTF.276 POLICE UPDATE

The meeting was attended by Inspector Cottam (GMP) who provided statistics on crimes committed over the last three months. The meeting was informed that all crime statistics for Whitefield and Unsworth and Greater Manchester were available to view on the Greater Manchester Police website.

The following statistics were given:

- violence with injury – 32
- violence without injury – 43
- burglary of a dwelling – 27
- burglary other – 17
- criminal damage/arson – 42

- vehicle offences – 40

Details and information on anti-social behaviour and hate crime was circulated.

An overview from beat officers on issues in the local area was also provided. It was reported that there had been Anti Social Behaviour around the Morrison's Store (Whitefield) and a mobile police station had been set up during the summer holiday period. There had been a number of cannabis farms closed down and traffic operations had resulted in the issue of speeding fines and the seizing of a vehicle.

PCSOs would be undertaking surveys, involving local residents to ask for opinions on the way in which policing is undertaken. The public were also being asked to provide information on the location of shops or premises selling 'legal highs'. The police were intending to visit any premises selling these items to highlight the risks those pose to health.

The campaign for a safer summer was coming to an end and attention would now turn to the autumn and winter period and the safety of children and young people leading up Halloween and bonfire night.

The 'market place' that had taken place prior to the Township Forum meeting and was seen as a success in view of the number of local residents who had attended and spoken to police officers and PCSOs on a one to one basis. This had allowed more time to fully answer questions and get information.

It was reported that GMP in partnership with the Bury Times would be publicising PACT meetings in order to reinvigorate the meetings and encourage residents to attend. Details of the Neighbourhood Beat Officers would also be publicised for the Unsworth and Prestwich areas.

It was proposed that an online police surgery would be developed using the GMP Bury South twitter account to encourage greater communication.

Operation 'Picton' would be in place from 13 September for the Jewish holiday period in targeted areas.

Councillor Whitby asked for statistics for rates of domestic violence. It was reported that rates of domestic violence varied throughout the year and had seen an increase during the summer period due in the main to excessive alcohol consumption.

The chair thanked Inspector Cottam for his attendance and his presentation.

WUTF.277 UPDATES

A number of updates were given relating to issues raised at meeting of the Township Forum.

Tree Management

Councillor FitzGerald reported that she had a number of issues related to overgrown trees. As these were in addition to those previously reported she suggested that rather than dealing with the issues as they arose on an individual basis it would be more efficient to tackle this ongoing problem with a collective approach to identify the areas where overgrown trees were causing problems. A survey of areas could be undertaken and then a consultation could then take place with the Council arboriculturist on what action could be taken and the timing for work.

Councillor Mallon stated that it was important to ensure that the trees listed were actually causing a problem /damage and were not listed just because the resident didn't want it there for other reasons.

Reference was also made the damage to properties caused by Japanese knotweed. Councillor Mallon reported that research was taking place to address this as a national issue and it appeared that a solution could be developed in 2/3 years time.

It was reported that there were a number of lime tree stumps on Thorp Street, Nipper Lane and Bradshaw Avenue that required removal due to their encroachment on foundations of houses. The trees were number 50 in the queue of tree removal jobs to be undertaken.

WUTF.278 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from the members of the public present about the work or performance of the Council or Council's services relevant to the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

Bury Diabetic Support Group

Geoffrey Goldberg informed the meeting that the Bury Diabetic Support Group was facing possible closure due to the reduction in the grant funding from it receives Bury Council (£500). The Group was a voluntary service for people with diabetes and provided a vital help and support for many people in Bury. There were around 20,000 diabetic people registered in Bury but this was expected to increase by a further 8000 following the lowering of the register threshold by the NHS. The Group provided one to one telephone support to diabetics but the grant would not cover the cost of this service.

Damaged fence due to fallen tree St Georges Park

The fallen branch reported at the last meeting of the Township Forum had caused damage to a fence. Could the Council arrange for this to be repaired?

Details would be passed on to the appropriate department.

Issues Hollins Village Area

The play areas require repairs to be made to the pieces of play equipment which had been vandalised and had become a safety risk for children. Also children going to Castlebrook High school were at risk because of the overgrown bushes that made it difficult to walk on the pavement next to the road on Hollins Lane. Could the Council also take action to cutback the bushes near to the golf club, as

it does every year? The comment was also made that the 20mph sign was also impeded by overgrown bushes.

Livsey Street – Whitefield

Could the Council reconsider the decision to introduce yellow lines on Livsey Street which would reduce the number of parking spaces available to residents? Contact has been made with the Council engineers but the response has been that the order is being made and cannot be altered. There are too many cars parked in the area and residents cannot park outside their own property. Residents would welcome a dialogue with the Council to address this problem. There was also issue with bin collections due to accessibility on Bill Lane.

Councillor FitzGerald reported that Councillor Whitby would arrange to meet with local residents and asked for contact details.

Whitefield Town Hall/ Uplands

It was reported that that there was nothing further to report on the issue since the last meeting.

Whitefield Tram Station

Could a crossing be introduced to the Whitefield Tram station similar to the crossing at Abraham Moss Metrolink tram station? Transport for Greater Manchester will be contacted.

Digital Updates

Councillor FitzGerald suggested that social media be used to pass on update information relating to the issues raised at Township Forums for wider contact.

WUTF.279 TOWNSHIP PLAN UPDATE

The Chair reported a copy of the updated Township Plan had been circulated and asked for the approval to adopt the plan.

It was agreed:

That the updated Township Plan be approved.

WUTF.280 FUNDING UPDATE

A copy of the funding report for the funding of projects and activities within wards was submitted.

The meeting was informed that an application for a £250 grant had been received from the North Manchester Jewish Women's Drama Group. The application had been considered by the Sub Group which had agreed to the funding proposal. The Township Forum was asked to formally approve the funding.

It was agreed:

1. That the Funding report be noted.
2. That approval be given to a grant of £250 to the North Manchester Jewish Women's Drama Group.

WUTF.281 REDUCTION OF TOWNSHIP FORUM MEETINGS

Councillor Grimshaw referred to the Review of Township Forums and the decision taken which would result in a reduction in the number of Township Forum meetings from six to four meetings per year. She stated that the meeting of the Whitefield and Unsworth Township Forum in November should remain in the meeting schedule for the reason that the Whitefield and Unsworth Township Forum had a high number of attendees which had helped to ensure the meetings were useful and productive for local residents. The length of time between the September and January meetings could result in a negative impact on this success

Councillor Grimshaw undertook to speak to the Leader of the Council on the matter.

COUNCILLOR D JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6:30pm and ended at 8:05pm)