

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

Date of Meeting: 17 November 2015

Present: Councillor D Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors P Adams, J Grimshaw, J Mallon, A Matthews,
M Whitby and M Wiseman

Advisory 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
Mrs T Heyworth – ELMS TRA

Public Attendance: 45 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors R Caserta and Councillor E Fitzgerald

WUTF.457 PARIS TERRORIST ATTACK

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, the Chair (Councillor Jones) asked the meeting to stand for a minute silence in respect for those people who had been lost their lives or were injured.

WUTF.458 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

WUTF.459 MINUTES

Delegated decision:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 8 September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

WUTF.460 POLICE - UPDATE

The Township Forum received an update on Police matters in Whitefield and Unsworth. Inspector Ben Cottam (GMP) attended the meeting and provided statistics on crimes committed since the last meeting.

The following statistics were given:

- burglary (dwelling) – 19
- burglary (other) – 11
- criminal damage/arson – 23
- vehicle offences – 20
- assaults (with injury) - 16
- assaults (without injury)-17

Inspector Cottam was asked if figures relating to domestic violence and hate crime would be included. It was reported that all crime statistics for Whitefield and Unsworth and Greater Manchester were available to view on the Greater Manchester Police website.

Inspector Cottam informed the members present of local PCSO's who had recently gone to St. Bernadette's RC Primary school to give a presentation. Visits had also taken place to cub groups to give talks on crime prevention.

Operation Treacle

The meeting was informed that the recent Operation Treacle joint initiative involving GMP and GM Fire and Rescue Service had targeted anti-social behaviour and firework safety during the Halloween and bonfire night period. The initiative had operation had been a success with no increase in the reports of anti-social behaviour made since 2014.

PACT meetings update

Inspector Cottam reminded the meeting that PACT meetings would take place one hour before each township forum meeting. Also to make PACT meetings more accessible to the wider community, GMP would be contactable on social media, for during specific times, using Twitter and Facebook to ask questions.

Operation darker nights

This is a high profile initiative focused on crime prevention in Bury. The initiative focuses on crime prevention, vehicle crime and Homewatch advice. In addition mobile police stations will be deployed in Bury town centre to provide crime prevention advice. There will also be an increase in the number of police officers on trams and at local Metrolink stations.

Paris Terror Attacks

The meeting was informed that there was no intelligence at this time to suggest there would be a terrorist threat in Manchester or the country as a whole. The current terror alert level is at 'severe' and this would remain in place. Inspector Cottam also stated that if a terror attack were to take place, there were concerns that GMP would not be in a position to react at the same level as the emergency services in Paris due to current resource levels. Members of the public were advised to stay vigilant.

The Chair then invited questions.

Parking on Park Lane

Vehicles are being parked on the pavement on Park Lane while training sessions take place on the adjacent field. Can something be done to raise awareness of the danger this can cause to blind people and other pedestrians.

The local authority can take enforcement action on vehicles parking on the pavement. PCSO contact will be passed on to help raise awareness.

The meeting was also told that photographs can be taken of vehicles parked on the pavement and they can be passed on to the police. Also if a resident confronts a driver regarding their parking and the driver becomes abusive then this can also be reported.

Inspector Cottam made that point that driver's also park on the pavement in order help make more space on the road and reduce the chances of a collision.

Parking on Wingate Drive

Drivers are parking their vehicles along Wingate Drive and this has prevented some residents who live there from leaving their homes. Also an emergency ambulance was held up trying to answer a call.

Empty building

Could something be done to prevent access and anti social behaviour taking place in the old spiritualist church in Whitefield? There is an electricity sub-station next to the building and there is a danger of fire if the building is not made secure.

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

WUTF.461 FIRST BUS - UPDATE

The Township Forum received an update form First Bus (Dave Rutherage) on services for the Whitefield and Unsworth area since the last meeting of the Township Forum. It was reported that he changes promised at the last meeting had been implemented on 25 October. However, it was not possible to introduce a service to the medical centre at Pilsworth at this time.

Mr Rutherage reported that the traffic congestion in Manchester was the worst it had ever been. Services were running on average between 20 minutes and 1hr 20mins. It was not possible to improve this situation because of the highways work taking place on the main roads, which remained closed. Diverting services to avoid road works in order to improve service times was not an option because resulted in diverting congestion to another area. The time taken to provide services was also having an impact on drivers who were required to take a 30 minute break after driving for a period of 5 hours.

97/98 Service – The services had been re-timed to give added flexibility for service users in Radcliffe and Whitefield. This has been reflected in user statistics.

First Bus want to propose changes to the current timetable to improve services but this is not yet possible until approval had been obtained from the Transport Commissioner. Make changes to services on the day was also not possible because passengers require advanced notice and it is not possible to contact them individually.

Reference was made to the terror attacks in Paris and passengers were asked to be vigilant and mindful of anything suspicious and to inform the driver of the vehicle. The bus company was promoting the 'HOT' principle (**H**idden, **O**bvious, **T**ypical). There had been no indication of bus vehicles being targeted.

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.

The Chair invited questions.

Older residents on Hillock Estate who use the bus were waiting over an hour for a bus to arrive, what can be done to improve the service?

Unfortunately there isn't a workable solution to help this situation. A suggestion was made that passengers could use the Smart App which is available to download to mobile phones which can advise where the bus is and the time it is likely to arrive at a stop.

Do bus drivers sometimes miss stops intentionally?

Yes a bus driver will sometimes miss a stop in order to make up time on a route. When a stop is missed it will be recorded at the depot.

When will Corporation Street in Manchester reopen to traffic?

The advice given states that the road will reopen in December 2015, however the original date was April 2015.

If First Bus is unable to provide a service is it likely that the company will lose passengers as they look for a alternative transportation?

This has not been the case so far. The First Bus marketing team is currently looking at advertising to attract people to use the bus.

In view of the local councillors who represent the Council on TfGM, why is it that local people, who will be affected by the planned works to the highway and Metrolink, are not consulted in advance?

Operators hold weekly meetings with TfGM and local authorities to discuss bus services. Unfortunately it appears that Manchester Council and Salford Council don't communicate with each other on a lot of the lower level highways works they have planned that impact on traffic flows across the two city centres and the surrounding authorities.

Councillor Grimshaw reported that an issue was raised at a meeting of the Hollins Village Association regarding a bus driver that had hidden the ticket machine and allowed passengers onto the bus. Why doesn't First Bus come to speak to passengers about services and what is needed before it makes decisions which sometimes are not good for everyone?

Bus drivers don't always scan bus passes because not all passes have a chip and won't register. Drivers can enter a pass manually but this method will not be accepted by TfGM and revenue won't be passed to First Bus. There is currently a 92% recording rate for bus passes.

It is not acceptable for the driver to hide the ticket machine and this would be investigated, however the ticket app on the ticket machine programme has slowed the machines ability to register passes. Tickets sometimes take up to 15 seconds to register and drivers may be concerned that registering a lot of passes will make the service run late.

First Bus will attend the next Township Forum (5 January 2016) to consult bus users on proposals for Sunny Bank and Hollins Brow.

It was agreed:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That First Bus be invited to the next meeting of the Township Forum to discuss bus service planning for the Sunny Bank and Hollins Brow areas.

WUTF.462 UPDATES (UPLANDS, FORMER TOWN HALL, HIGHER LANE - HICKORY GRANGE)

Whitefield Town Hall site

Following consultation with the head of planning development there are updates to report at this time.

Hickory grange

Concern was expressed regarding the state of hickory grange. The site is situated between two schools and is in a derelict state after building had stopped. The site was considered dangerous for anyone getting onto the site. The suggestion was made that the Council should issue an enforcement notice to the owner of the site to either complete the building work or to clear the site. It was reported that that the owner of the site was recently declared bankrupt.

Councillor Wiseman reported she and Councillor Mallon were involved with the matter. The meeting was informed that the Council was not in position to make a compulsory purchase order of the site and the administrator involved was unwilling to spend any further money on the completion or clearing of the building work.

It was agreed:

That the updates be noted.

WUTF.463 TREES UPDATES

Les Beardmore, arborist for bury council attended the meeting to answer questions about tree related matters. An outline of the work of the Council's tree services was given and an idea of the scale of work across the borough.

Les stated that the Council is inundated with tree requests and there is currently an 8 month backlog for tree stump removals and other tree services. The team was small and was split between larger jobs across the borough and smaller jobs (panic growth on highways) and sometimes struggled to meet the demand for its services. These included highways, 6 Town Housing establishments and schools within the Bury.

The Chair invited questions.

The meeting was informed that following a request made at the Township Forum for the removal of tree stumps on Thorpe Street and Nipper Lane work had been carried out to remove the stumps and to reinstate the parts of the highway affected by tree roots. Thanks were given to the officers for the work carried out

and to the effectiveness of the Township Forum. The pavements were now hazard free areas.

Mrs Garner referred to tree roots belonging to the Council that were blocking the drains on her property. She had been advised to contact a specialist to get the DNA of the tree concerned in order to get the Council to admit liability of ownership. Mr Beardmore advised that a claim would need to be put to the Council's insurance officer and then checks would be made on the ownership of the tree roots.

Councillor Mallon had been involved with the matter and asked if making a legal challenge to the Council could be avoided so financial resources were not wasted.

Mr Beardmore suggested making an appointment with the Customer Contact office and he would visit Mrs Garner.

Mrs Heyworth asked if arrangements could be made to cut back trees at All Saints School.

Mr Beardmore reported that each school controlled its own budgets and were responsible for the maintenance of trees and could buy in the Council services or private contractor.

Mr Beardmore was asked when the work to the trees on Hollins Play Area would be carried out. It was reported that the work would take place before the end of March 2016.

Could the Council look at cutting back tree branch growth for trees on Bury Road in Radcliffe which were extending onto the highway.

Mr Beardmore was asked the name of the trees located on Manchester Road. It was reported that the trees were called 'Hornbeams'.

The chair thanked Mr Beardmore for his attendance.

WUTF.464 TOWN PLAN UPDATE

An updated Township Plan was submitted.

It was agreed:

That the updated Township Plan be noted.

WUTF.465 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.

Mrs Marshall reminded the Township Forum of the issue she had raised regarding repairs to the war memorial at Stand Church. Since then Mrs Marshall reported that she had carried out research on the memorial and with the help of Councillor

FitzGerald tabled a question at a meeting of Council. The outcome of this has been the repair of the memorial in time for Remembrance Sunday and Bury Council has asked for her help in applying for grants from the Manchester Diocese.

Mrs Marshall thanked the Township Forum for listening and providing her with the contacts in the Council to take the matter forward to see Whitefield have its memorial successfully restored.

- Mr Greenalgh informed of the potential amalgamation of the Aldi and McDonalds car parks. Bury Council owned half of the car park with the rest owned privately. The issue had been raised with the Council's Highways Section and a response is yet to be received.
- Porada Restaurant – an area outside the restaurant had been made into a car park without planning permission from the Council. Councillor Mallon reported that parking in Whitefield was a major concern and it was important to ensure that residents and businesses are supported. Local Councillors are seeking a review of the parking in Whitefield to ensure the sustainability of businesses. It was understood that a retrospective planning application could be submitted and as with the planning process objections could be submitted. Residents did not accept the response and considered that a stronger stance should be taken to prevent other businesses taking land without agreement. The car park is within a Conservation Area.
- A planning application for a wind turbine at Whitefield Golf Club had been rejected by the Planning Control Committee.
- A new chemist had been given approval to open for the Besses area.
- The floral displays in Whitefield were not as good as the displays in Radcliffe this year.
- The time for crossing on the green man at the pedestrian crossing between Ringley road and church lane is too short and needs to be extended.
- Flooding on Sunnybank for the last 2 years yet nothing is being done about it. Also, the resident complained that sailor brow has been quite untidy recently.
- Customers using the KFC restaurant in Prestwich were backing up and causing traffic jams.
- Taxi rank parking cars outside their office (situated on the main road). This is causing increased congestion on bury new road. The resident asked for a consultation between the council and the owners to stop the company taxis from parking there.
- Issues raised at previous meetings by Mr Knight.

WUTF.466 WHITEFIELD AMBULANCE STATION - PROPOSAL FOR RELOCATION

A copy of a letter from Councillor Kerrison was submitted regarding a proposal to close the Ambulance Station Whitefield with the service to relocate to the Manchester Fire and Rescue Service facility located .8 miles away.

It was agreed:

That the information be noted.

WUTF.467 FUNDING REPORT

A copy of the funding report was submitted on decisions taken to fund requests from local groups.

It was agreed:

That the Funding report be noted.

COUNCILLOR D JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 1:00pm and ended at 4:15pm)