

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

Date of Meeting: 10 March 2015

Venue: Elms Community Centre, Green Lane, Whitefield

Present: Councillor J Grimshaw (In the Chair)
Councillors P Adams, B Caserta, E FitzGerald, D Jones, J Mallon, A Matthews, 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 T Heyworth (ELMS TRA)

Public attendance: 42 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies for absence: Mrs S Bannister – Jewish Representative Council

WUTF.792 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

WUTF.793 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2015 were submitted. An update on those matters raised at the meeting was circulated.

Reference was made the Porada restaurant (Bury New Road, Whitefield) and the issue of cars being parked on a plot of land at the rear of the premises. The issue had been raised by Christine North at the previous meeting.

It was reported that there was currently a legal dispute between the Council and owners of Porada on the ownership of the plot of land.

Contact had been made with the Council Planning Development Services with the response that a planning application would be required to allow parking to take place.

Updates would be provided on the outcome of the matter.

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

WUTF.794 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

In the lead up to the General and Local elections in May, the Chair read out a statement regarding the importance of ensuring Bury residents are registered to vote.

Letters had been delivered to all households during February to confirm whether or not those listed are registered and what to do if individuals are not registered and need to be added to the property or removed.

The process was crucial to ensure all eligible people can vote in the General and Local Elections on Thursday 7 May. The meeting was asked to support the process.

WUTF.795 FIRST BUS SERVICES - UPDATE

The meeting was attended by David Longmate, Brendan Jones, Alan Branan and David Rutherage from First Bus to talk about bus services in the Whitefield and Unsworth area. Councillor Noel Bayley also attended the meeting in his capacity as a Council representative on Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

The meeting was informed of the proposed changes that would be taking place to bus services within Whitefield and Unsworth starting on 12 April 2015. The changes proposed related to the need to address the quality of the current services. The changes would affect the 92, 93, 95, 97 and 98 services. Details of the changes to services were circulated before the meeting.

Reference was made to rumours about the services to the Hillock estate and an assurance was given that the bus service was not being withdrawn. The 92 and 93 services had been monitored and the statistical evidence produced had identified that the service was not frequently used and was often delayed and could no longer be sustained as a commercial service. This would be replaced by the 97 service.

The Chair invited questions.

Mrs Taylor referred to the trialled 92 service to Pilsworth which enabled residents to access the medical centre and ASDA. This had been stopped as a result of the works undertaken by United Utilities on Croft Lane. The service was used with the likelihood of more users because of the employers located at Pilsworth.

It was reported that the statistical information did not reflect this view. The service was not being used sufficiently by people wanting to travel to the medical centre or to the ASDA supermarket for it to be sustained. The decline in use started about 18 months before the Croft Lane works had started. The trial was initially for 6 months which was extended for 12 months but the take up of the service did not develop.

Reference was made to the lack of late night services leaving Bury, in particular the 135 service which stopped running at 11:00pm. There were no other services to Whitefield after this time and the only other modes of public transport available were taxis and Metrolink. There are a lot of people who have to walk home from the centre of Bury because there is no bus. These included people who had been on a night out or who have been working.

It was reported that the cut off time for services had been 11:00pm for many years apart from Friday and Saturday evenings when the night bus service was provided. This has now been stopped due to budget related cuts.

In view of the comments made regarding the lack of a 135 bus service after 11:00pm, First undertook to look at extending the 135 service from Bury if there was sufficient demand, as suggested. It was stated that First wanted to meet its passengers face to face and discuss the services it provided to ensure the best service was available.

Councillor Bayley stated that First bus was a commercial operation and had looked strategically at the best way to link public transport services for the Whitefield and Unsworth area. It is noted that the proposals won't suit everyone but it is not possible for services to be provided in all areas.

The information relating to the proposed routes would be circulated using the usual means and would be available on the First website and the TfGM.

The Chair also read out a letter she had received from Mrs Margaret Ashcroft.

It was agreed:

That the representatives be thanked for their attendance at the meeting and the proposals to bus services be noted.

WUTF.796 POLICE UPDATE

The meeting was attended by Inspector Ben Cottam and Sergeant Richard Garland. Inspector Cottam had recently been appointed to the Neighbourhood Policing Team at Whitefield. In view of the importance of Township Forum meetings for passing on information to the local community Inspector Cottam reported that he would endeavour to have a presence at each meeting. Reference was made to the PAC meetings and the best time to hold them. This could be before the Township Forum.

Sergeant Garland then provided information on Policing matters in the Whitefield and Unsworth area. Particular reference was made to the need to ensure that windows, doors and outbuildings were secured. The change in season and longer day light usually resulted in an increase in the number of thefts from sheds and properties where doors and windows were left unlocked.

Councillor Jones welcomed the reassurance of visible officers on the street and requested that this be continued.

Lydia Kirkham informed the meeting of an online social media website called 'Streetlife' which is a local community forum for circulating information, organising community events, gathering volunteer resources and raising issues. The site address is Streetlife.com.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

WUTF.797 PARKING ISSUES

The Car Parking Manager (John Foudy) (Bury Council) attended the meeting and provided an overview of the work of the Car Parking office to enforce parking regulations within the borough.

The Chair invited questions.

Can action be taken to address the parking of non-disabled registered vehicles in disabled parking spaces at Unsworth Pole? There have been numerous complaints from disabled people who have had to find other parking spaces in other more inconvenient places.

Can action be taken to stop the parking of vehicles on Wellington Road which is a double yellow line road adjacent to Holy Cross College?

The Tandra taxi office on Bury New Road has taxis parked outside constantly and these cause delays for traffic travelling towards Bury Town Centre because one lane is blocked.

Councillor Mallon made the point that parking issues should be considered at the planning stage when considering the location of a business. Business like food take-away shops and taxi offices should be located away from areas where customers and employees are likely to park their vehicles and block the main road. This is not usually considered and is left to parking enforcement to deal with when things go wrong.

John Foudy reported that the matters raised would be included in the list of 'hot spots' across the borough which receive special attention from parking wardens.

It was agreed:

The Chair thanked John Foudy for his attendance.

WUTF.798 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 Taylor reported that following the major works undertaken by United Utilities (UU) on Croft Lane the road surface had been left in a bad state as a result of the works and damage caused by the heavy plant vehicles used by UU. It appeared that action was being taken by UU but it may result in the Council having to pay for the repairs to the road surface which was unfair to Bury Council tax payers and would cause even more inconvenience and disruption to road users and local residents.

Mrs Green reported that a petition had been started to raise awareness about the poor condition of the Whitefield Town Hall site which was blighting the area. She asked what action was the Council going to take on the matter.

The Chair reported that there was an ongoing legal dispute between the current owner(s) of the site and the Council.

Mrs Moore referred to Copper Lane and requested the dog waste bin to be relocated to half way down the lane to help reduce the amount of fouling on the street and on properties through inconsiderate dog owners.

Mrs Kirkham asked if a new bin could be placed in Springwater Park following the clean up that had taken place using local volunteers.

WUTF.799 WHITEFIELD AND UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP ACTION PLAN UPDATE

It was agreed:

That the Township Plan be noted.

WUTF.800 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT

Consideration was given to a Community Funding report which provided an update on the levels of funding available in the Whitefield and Unsworth wards for 2014/15.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

WUTF.801 COMMUNITY NOTICES

The Chair invited attendees to give any dates of events taking place in the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

It was reported that the Elms Community Centre would be undergoing a period of refurbishment and alternative meeting venues would be required in June and July.

COUNCILLOR J GRIMSHAW
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6:30 pm and ended at 8.40 pm)