

**ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF CASTLE AND PRIORY,  
ST JAMES'S AND ST THOMAS'S COMMUNITY FORUM**

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 at 6.30 p.m.  
at St Thomas's Community Network, Beechwood Road, Dudley

**PRESENT: -**

Councillor K Finch (Chair);  
Councillor A Ahmed (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Arshad, K Ahmed, Ali, M Aston and A Finch.

M Bowsher (Lead Officer to the Forum) – Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, S Griffiths – Directorate of Corporate Resources; together with R Dugdale – Directorate of the Urban Environment; 2 representatives of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and 16 Members of the public .

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15.       **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Roberts and Waltho.

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16.       **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Following general announcements the Councillors and officers introduced themselves.

The Lead Officer referred to information circulated concerning Dudley's 'Big Switch' initiative and the 'Big Question' budget consultation.

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17.       **LISTENING TO YOU: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS**

Local residents raised questions and made comments as set out below. These issues would be referred to the relevant Directorate or appropriate body for a response:-

**Nature of question/comment**

- (1)      Request for improved lighting in Pearce Close, Russells Hall.
- (2)      Request to remove green moss on pavements in Pearce Close, Russells Hall.

- (3) Request for improved marking of bus stops in Ashenhurst Road, Russells Hall.
- (4) Request to further extend a 'white line' road marking at the bottom of Pearce Close, Russells Hall.
- (5) Request to deal with rubbish at the top of Bushey Fields Road, Russells Hall and replace a road sign that had been thrown into the bushes.
- (6) Request for additional investment and improvements to Russells Hall playing field.
- (7) Request for the re-marking of disabled parking place at 1 Pearce Close, Russells Hall.
- (8) Request to attend to ivy on the side of 38 Ashenhurst Road, Russells Hall and remove rubbish from the back garden.
- (9) Concerns about the slippery road surface in Wrens Nest Road, Dudley and a request for the Council to carry out suitable testing.
- (10) Concerns relating to the installation of 'mismatched' floor tiles and units during a kitchen replacement to a property in Laurel Road, Dudley.

Reference was made to the severe financial constraints faced by the Council and the need for community activity to help deal with some of the issues of concern.

Other Issues raised and/or answered on the evening:-

- Concerns about the effectiveness of road sweepers operating in the Wrens Nest area. Ward Councillors undertook to investigate this matter.
- Consultation concerning the re-opening of Blackacre Road, Dudley. The Cabinet Member for Transport reported that the consultation process was ongoing and no decisions had been taken. All consultation responses would be considered. It was acknowledged that this issue needed to be viewed in a wider context taking account of traffic flow in the town centre and other roads in the local vicinity.
- The Black Country Tool Bank initiative was promoted along with the ongoing efforts to establish a tool library.
- Request to reconsider the opening of public toilets in Dudley Town Centre on Sundays. Reference was made to ongoing consideration of this matter and potential discussions with the local business community.

- Issue of the 'no entry' gap in King Street, Dudley not being adhered to, and not being enforced.
- Various issues were raised concerning the Hippodrome in Castle Hill, Dudley, including a recent site visit by Members and Officers to view the outside of the building only; concerns about votes taken at the Development Control Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2013; the lack of responses to questions and the non-attendance of Councillors/MP at a recent public meeting. It was confirmed that the Development Control Committee had deferred the planning applications and no decision had yet been taken regarding demolition. The planning and regeneration issues were subject to separate processes. Mr Dugdale responded to issues concerning the conclusions of the independent consultant appointed to consider the business case and undertook to liaise with the Head of Planning concerning the responses to questions previously raised.
- Representatives of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) referred to the ongoing consultation on a new vision for Urgent Care in Dudley. The current consultation process would close on 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 and responses were encouraged. The proposals involved the closure of the Walk in Centre at Holly Hall, Dudley.

Members registered their concerns regarding the consultation process. The Community Forum also expressed its opposition to the closure of the Holly Hall Walk in Centre. However, Members were of the view that should the closure be pursued by the CCG, the Walk In facility should be relocated in Dudley Town Centre and not at Russells Hall Hospital.

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## 18. WORKING WITH YOU – TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

- Councillor Ali made reference to regeneration initiatives affecting Dudley Town Centre and queried the position and timescales concerning proposed supermarket developments. Mr Dugdale reported on the ongoing process to identify the Council's preferred option and undertook to confirm the timescales involved. A request was made for the Councillors in the 3 wards represented on the Forum to be updated and consulted on future developments.
  - Councillor Ali referred to the timing of the traffic lights on Bunns Lane, Dudley and the adverse affect this had on traffic flow.
  - Councillor A Finch requested a progress report relating to the former King Arthur Public House.
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AREA GRANTS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on applications for funding.

Councillor Ali declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of St Thomas's Network.

AGREED:-

- (1) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to approve the following:
- A grant in the sum of £1,000 to Fast+Aid Charity towards the purchase of a second vehicle to be used in the Dudley area to be funded on the basis of equal contributions from the three wards represented on this Community Forum.
  - A grant in the sum of £2,500 to Wrens Nest Community Centre to carry out various internal improvements and enhancements across the site to be funded from the allocation to the Castle and Priory ward.
  - A grant in the sum of £250 to St Edmund King and Martyr Church, Castle Street, Dudley to replace lighting for the Church Tower Clock to be funded from the allocation to the St James's ward.
  - A grant in the sum of £1,000 to Old Park Tenants and Residents Association, towards a community fun day, to be funded from the allocation to the Castle and Priory Ward, subject to the additional £1,000 requested being referred to the Gornal/Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Community Forum for consideration as match funding.
  - A grant in the sum of £2,173.50 to the Whole Child Foundation CIC to provide a pilot extended project session for young people at St Thomas's Network during the February, 2014 half-term school holidays to be funded from the allocation to the St. Thomas's ward.

- (2) That the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to make an urgent recommendation to the Director of Corporate Resources on the application for up to £2,536.94 received from the Environmental Management Division relating to Christmas trees, subject to clarification of the contributions made by the former Area Committees and consideration of the funding mechanism for future expenditure of this nature.
  - (3) That the application received in relation to Unit 3sixty, Stourbridge be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum.
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20. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Forum would be on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 at 6.30pm at St Barnabas Church, Middlepark Road, Russells Hall, Dudley.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm