

SMITHILLS AREA FORUM

MEETING, 27th February 2014

Present, 10 members of the public attended the meeting.

Councillor Hayes	- Smithills Ward
Councillor Radlett	- Smithills Ward
Councillor Swarbrick	- Smithills Ward

Also in attendance

John Shannon	- Area Co-ordinator
John Kelly	- Environmental Services Representative
Marion Griffin	- Business Support Officer
Charlie Barlow	- Lancashire Wildlife Trust
David Butcher	- Friends of Moss Bank Park
Sgt Alex Metcalfe	Greater Manchester Police

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Julie Hilling MP

Councillor Swarbrick in the Chair

9. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Swarbrick welcomed everyone and introduced Councillors Radlett and Hayes. She also introduced other Council and partner officers present; and introduced Sergeant Alex Metcalfe covering the Bolton North area.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2013 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

12. UPDATES ON PROJECTS IN MOSS BANK PARK

John Shannon gave an update on the projects in Moss Bank Park as follows:-

Construction of the new Café:

- Plans were available on display at the Forum
- Construction had started recently on the Café building.
- Construction of the building is planned to be completed in mid-June.
- The building would then be commissioned and open to the public towards the end of the summer.
- The building would have a food preparation area, serving area, toilet facilities and main dining area which could also be a resource area.
- In the meantime the kiosk would be open as normal from the start of spring/summer.

Improvements to the Tennis Courts:

- The Council would be working in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association, who would provide a qualified professional tennis coach on a peripatetic basis.
- The lights would only be activated when supervised tennis coaching sessions were held.
- The tennis courts would be resurfaced and fencing and netting replaced
- Date for completion is hoped to be before 23rd June 2014 (pre-Wimbledon)

Following this presentation Councillors stated that they would pursue further clarification on the following points with Environmental Services and the Lawn Tennis Association;

- Would children playing football on the courts trigger the lighting?

Q3

- How would the tennis coaching sessions be advertised and managed?
- How would the cost of the tennis coaching sessions be covered?
- What type of surface would be used?

Presentation – Lancashire Wildlife Trust

The Chair introduced Charlie Barlow who gave a presentation on the work around the Moss Bank Food hub, following consultation with local communities in Bolton it had been decided that there was a need for the Moss Bank Food Hub project.

The main aims were as follows:

- To develop an Interactive food trail
- To provide access to fresh produce for members of the local community
- To increase local skills via training and volunteering opportunities, to include weekly volunteering opportunities, for example, skills in retail, marketing, food growing, site management and community development
- To provide on-site education sessions for schools developed, linked into the national curriculum
- Provide a venue to promote healthy eating, exercise sessions and the “five a day challenge” linked with produce grown on site
- Have an outdoor kitchen
- To support former armed services personnel develop food growing and horticultural skills.

These aims would be achieved through:

- Effective community development
- Establishment of partnerships via organisations and community groups
- Financial sustainability via external funding

Links to former Animal World site:

- The closure of Animal World had a significant impact on visitor numbers to the HIVE.
- In partnership with Bolton Council LWT had secured a grant to commission a pre-feasibility study to assess future options for the site. Bolton Council were currently considering the report.

Councillor Swawbrick thanked Charlie Barlow and acknowledged the good work with the Moss Bank Food hub.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

Friends of Moss Bank Park

Councillor Swarbrick introduced David Butcher, Friends of Moss Bank Park, who explained that a meeting of interested park users took place 13 years ago to discuss issues including; litter, drainage of sewers and the neglect of the walled garden and Rock Garden. Following this meeting the Friends of Moss Bank Park group had been formed in 2001.

Volunteers had carried out improvements in the walled garden and Rock Garden including; removing debris, rebuilding paths, reforming beds, tidying and planting and working in partnership with Council staff, and it was anticipated that the Rock Garden would reopen in the Spring of 2014.

It was also explained that, the volunteers met every Tuesday morning to carry out work and new members were always very welcome. Residents who might be interested in joining Friends of Moss Bank Park were asked to contact David Butcher.

Councillor Swarbrick thanked David Butcher and acknowledged the significant contribution that the Friends of Moss Bank Park had made to improvements in the park.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

13. UPDATE ON BUDGETS AND PROGRESS

Councillor Swarbrick introduced John Shannon who gave an update on budgets devolved to the Area Forum.

Area Forum Budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15

Highways Maintenance Budget; Allocation - £19,200 Balance - £0

Projects approved since last meeting;

- Contribution to cost of resurface of Seaton Road from Knowles Bridge Street to Barcroft Road - £19,200

Area Forum Flat Rate Budget; Allocation - £13,750 Balance - £1,603
(To be used on projects which benefit residents of Smithills Ward)

Projects approved since last meeting;

- Support cost of introduction of 20MPH zone at Barrow Bridge including legal and administration costs and signage - £11,897
- Support cost of wildflower meadow planting at Johnson Fold roundabout - £250

Resolved –That the report, together with those projects approved under the Council’s Scheme of Delegation, and those questions asked and answered on the night be noted.

14. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Councillor Swarbrick introduced this agenda item and invited all forum attendees to ask any questions they may have regarding issues in the Smithills Ward.

- Q1. A resident raised concerns about traffic using the road through Moss Bank Park not adhering to the 10MPH speed limit.
- Could more speed limit signs be provided (on posts and on road surface)?
 - Could speed checks be carried out in the park?
 - Could more speed bumps be installed?

Q6

- A1. The question would be passed to Environmental Services for response
- Q2. Quiet residential roads are now being given a 20mph speed restriction. Are there any plans to introduce this speed limit near Church Road school; Captains Clough Road and Church Road?
- A2. There were no plans to introduce this speed restriction at the moment in these areas, as no funding would be available.
- Q3. Had the current speed restriction measures on Church Road had any benefit?
- A3. There had been no further recorded accidents in the period since the measures had been introduced. The reduced frequency had been a measure of success.

Resolved- That the questions and answers be noted and those questions that were not answered will be directed to the appropriate department.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Councillor Swarbrick concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and he advised that the date, time and venue of the next Area Forum Meeting would be confirmed nearer the time.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and finished at 8.10pm)