

**Minutes of Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013**  
**Eric Atkinson Centre, Wellington Gardens**

**Chair:** Cllr Caroline Gruen

**1 Welcome and introductions**

- 1.1 Cllr Gruen welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were received from Anthony Silsden and Blanche Champion.

**2 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed.

A member of the forum queried who owned the derelict site on Broad Lane. Cllr Gruen responded that the Council owns most of it and will request that it be cleared of rubbish. K Ritchie hadn't had a response from Parks about the proposal for a new footpath at Bramley Falls Park. KS to chase.

CG

KS

**3 Police Update**

- 3.1 Acting Sgt Mark Turner summarised the recent crime figures.

Burglary - 4 last month, down by 2 on the same period last year

Burglary Other - reduced by 10 compared with last year

Criminal Damage - 30 cases, a reduction of 13 on the previous year

Theft from motor vehicle - 8 last month, 10 fewer than last year

- 3.2 A high number of burglaries and theft from motor vehicles continue to be perpetrated on unlocked properties and vehicles. Darker nights increase the risk from opportunist thieves, please keep doors locked even if you are home, and hide bags and sat navs when you leave your car.

- 3.3 Sgt Turner warned about bogus carol singers who distract you at the door and send someone round the back to break in.

- 3.4 Cllr Gruen welcomed questions from the floor:

Q: If a dog is barking at night and a neighbour complains, what would the police do? In this case, it transpired the dog was barking at someone trying to break into a shed.

A: The police wouldn't attend to a noisy dog, but if your dog is acting out of character and you think there may be suspicious activity going on, contact the police's non emergency number 101 and a patrol will visit if they are free. If you see a crime always call 999.

- 3.5 Q: Some months ago, a forum member contacted the police about re-starting a Neighbourhood Watch scheme but he didn't receive a response.

A: Very sorry, the police are encouraging more Neighbourhood Watch schemes, we will contact anyone interested in setting one up.

- 3.6 Q: Increase in theft of numberplates, what are the police doing to raise awareness?

A: The Neighbourhood Policing Team has run sessions at Bramley Shopping Centre to install security screws to deter thieves.

- 3.7 Cllr Gruen thanked the police for attending and passed on compliments from the forum to the local neighbourhood policing team for all their hard work.

#### **4 Bramley Shopping Centre / Tesco**

- 4.1 Paul Smith, Bramley Shopping Centre Manager and Rick Howitt, Deputy Manager, Tesco Bramley attended to update the forum on future proposals for the shopping centre and join a wider debate about the shops and services the centre offers.
- 4.2 P Smith reported that the New River, the owner of the centre have long term aspirations to convert the three storey office block into residential dwellings, and the council are exploring the possibility of renting those as new council properties. In the meantime, New River is talking to a community arts group about a short term lease for studios and gallery space. Some repair work needs to be carried out on the building before this can go ahead.
- 4.3 Around the centre, landscaping has been completed by the Halifax building and lighting has been improved in the front car park. New River is considering a proposal to redesign and re-tarmac the front car park to increase capacity. They are also looking at introducing a small community market and would like to hear from any local suppliers who might want to take a stall. A forum member suggested creating a performance space in the car park for local schools etc. It was agreed this was a very good idea.
- 4.4 The centre is looking to support new businesses by offering introductory rent offers or a short term 'pop up' shop.
- 4.5 Rick Howitt explained that Tesco is keen to hear from local residents about any issues with the store, e.g. abandoned trollies. Staff at the store are promoting community projects and have been fundraising for the new Bramley War Memorial.
- 4.6 Cllr Gruen thanked the Tesco staff for their support for the War Memorial, and also the store and shopping centre for helping with the Bramley Festive Light switch on.
- 4.7 Q: The lights on the rear car park were off at 5pm, it could cause an accident.  
RH: Thank you, this will be looked into.
- 4.8 Q: It was previously reported that the office block would be re-clad.  
A: This is likely to be part of any residential development, but there are no plans in the short term to carry this out.
- 4.9 Q: The large number of pawn shops and high cost loan shops are giving the centre a bad name. It's sad to see so many people queuing up to use them every Monday.  
A: The landlords are aware of the public's feelings towards this and they are not encouraging new lets to this type of business.
- 4.10 Q: Tesco had a loan company promoting their service in the store. Salespeople can often be quite intimidating and persistent.  
A: They are organised through head office, but local managers will respond to any complaints and have asked some to leave due to inappropriate behaviour.
- 4.12 Cllr Gruen widened the debate to look at the type of shops the centre and public would benefit from. Shoe repairs, a florist and a restaurant are needed in the area. P Smith responded that because the units are quite small, multi-national companies often aren't interested. The letting agents are constantly promoting the centre to retailers.
- 4.13 Lee Ingham, manager of Bramley Elderly Action reported that his organisation is looking to open a multi-purpose 'Community Shop' in the centre. It will have a second hand shop to raise funds for the charity, and will also be an advice point for the wider community and possibly a collection base for the Bramley Credit Union. Negotiations are ongoing with New River to try and agree a discounted rent.

#### **5 Bramley Credit Union**

- 5.1 Bramley Credit Union is a very small organisation run by a handful of volunteers. They

offer low cost loans and savings to the community via a number of local collection points. The organisation desperately needs new volunteers to keep it going and expand to offer a better alternative to the high cost and illegal money lenders so prevalent in this area.

5.2 There are a range of volunteering roles including staffing a collection point, inputting data, administration and advertising. Anyone able to give just a few hours would be most welcome. Contact Kate Sibson on 3367871 [kate.sibson@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:kate.sibson@leeds.gov.uk) if you would like more information.

5.3 Tesco and the Shopping Centre would be happy to host a stand for the Credit Union to sign up new members.

## 6 **Bramley Festive Lights Switch On**

6.1 The will take place on Friday 29th November at the shopping centre, organised by forum members Helen Garrand and Terence Knapton. There will be lots of exciting artists on stage including local schools and Dean Michael of Black Lace, ending with a firework display from the top of the shopping centre.

## 7 **Area Committee Update**

7.1 Kevin Ritchie, co-optee to the Area Committee updated the forum on the last meeting. The theme of the meeting was 'Health' and the committee heard how the NHS, GPs and the Council's new Public Health team are working more closely together. Data is being increasingly used to target services, and some areas of Bramley will benefit as there are pockets of poor health outcomes and lower than average life expectancy in the ward.

7.2 The Committee also heard about the need for more primary school and Early Years nursery places. The Committee asked officers to work more closely with local schools to identify opportunities for expansion.

7.3 The Area Committee's Wellbeing Grant Fund is now open for applications from community projects starting after April next year. Contact Kate Sibson from the Area Support Team for more information - [kate.sibson@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:kate.sibson@leeds.gov.uk) (0113) 3367871.

7.4 The Area Committee is open to the public, and anyone can speak to the councillors in the open forum. The next meeting is on Wednesday 19th December at 5pm at St Bartholomew's Primary School, Strawberry Lane, Armley.

## 8 **Any other business**

8.1 Barca are working with British Gas to promote their Warm Home Discount which offers their vulnerable electricity customers £135 credit on their bill. Contact British Gas on 0800 2948604 for more information on eligibility criteria, and quote STWBARCA.

8.2 Other energy suppliers will offer similar discounts, the elderly and people claiming certain benefits may be eligible. Contact your own supplier for more information.

8.3 Leeds City Council is offering the Wrap Up Leeds service to help home owners and people living in private rented houses access discounted or free insulation and boiler upgrades. Some eligibility criteria applies, contact 0113 3950757 or [www.wrapupleeds.co.uk](http://www.wrapupleeds.co.uk) for more information.

## 9 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**